

After The Big One – Chapter 1 – The Big Decision

Holbrook was everything that Gary said it was and everything that Ron said it was. It was a small community dominated by a railroad hub and a power plant southwest of town. They found residential lots from 1-5 acres each (or more), located just off the I-40 freeway, 7 miles East of Holbrook in the community of Sun Valley, Arizona.

Priced approximately \$4,575 per acre, the property was just what Gary had been looking for. Water, power and telephone service existed on the property, though water mains were needed for some lots. Septic tanks needed to be installed for sewage. They could buy five acres for only \$22,875 and a double wide on a basement at another \$75,000. They could do it for about \$102 thousand. Needless to say, Gary was already to move, just as soon as the settlement came in from the earthquake insurance.

Apparently, Ron and Clarence must have been nicer to the claims adjuster than Gary was or perhaps it was just the difference between the insurance companies. They received their settlement checks from their insurance company before Gary did.

Gary had been working on them; urging, pleading and cajoling ever since they had returned from Sun Valley. Clarence was the first to cave in, even though his Lucy had been indifferent when they'd visited Arizona.

Ron was the harder sell. He wanted to move to the Cedar Hill in northern New Mexico where Robert lived. When Gary pointed out that he would be just hours from Robert's and that he would be breaking up the team, he finally gave in.

They went shopping in Lancaster to see what types of doublewide mobile homes were available. They decided on the Fleetwood with each of them picking a different floor plan variation of the same model home. The dealer referred them to Fleetwood dealers in Lakeside, Show Low, and Gallup.

Gary had some extras in mind for his home and hoped that he could talk Ron and Clarence into them. He wanted to build a storm shelter 20' wide and 30' deep about 4' away from his basement. To insure that the storm shelter was an all-purpose room it had to be lower than the basement.

The 4' distance between the walls of the storm shelter and the basement would permit him to build a staircase down from the basement to the shelter. He wanted an 8' ceiling in the shelter with a 6" slab roof overlain with 6' of dirt. Basically that meant that the hole for the shelter had to be 15' deep. The shelter wouldn't be fancy, just a 6" slab with block walls and a 6" slab for an overhead. He called the Gallup dealer because he was the only dealer that sold the model of home they wanted.

The dealer told him that the shelter, though smaller than the basement, would cost him the same amount as the basement because of the deeper excavation and concrete overhead. Gary figured it was cheap at twice the price.

They had to have the rubble cleared off their slabs and sell their lots. They took care of the former and headed for Sun Valley to buy their lots. Each laid down cash for a 5-acre lot and arranged for the septic tank installation and water main extension. They drove on to Gallup late in the afternoon and went to see Sun Country/Great American, the Fleetwood dealer.

They had so few possessions, barely a suitcase each for Clarence and Lucy and Ron and Linda that they didn't have to worry about storing anything. Gary had pulled a U-Haul Trailer with the contents of their shed. It would take 4-5 weeks for their new homes to be delivered and set up, so he opted to rent a storage stall on a month-to-month basis. Man, talk about starting over. Everyone had opted for leisure clothes and not that many at first, just 3 changes. It was a good thing the homes came with appliances. Gary gave his refrigerator to the junkman and his freezer to Amy.

John and Kevin didn't want any part of moving to Arizona so John found an apartment in the San Fernando Valley and Kevin just sort of moved in with John. The three old geezers and their wives were footloose and fancy-free. Their new homes were on the way and that lifetime of accumulated junk (some folks call them memories) were gone and almost forgotten.

Gary and Sharon would have to replace their computers and her sewing machine in addition to buying new furniture. In fact, each family had a few extras to acquire in addition to their new furniture, but they would be one heck of a lot less in debt than they would have been had they replaced their Palmdale homes. They took advantage of the waiting time to visit relatives. Gary and Sharon drove back to Iowa, Ron and Linda headed to Robert's and Clarence and Lucy took off for Tennessee. They agreed to meet back in Gallup on Sunday, October 31, 2004.

Clarence and Lucy arrived back in Gallup 2 days early and went shopping for furniture for their new home. Lucy found what she liked and they bought it. Clarence was the typical husband and was only interested in a comfortable chair, a Lazyboy recliner.

Gary and Sharon arrived the next day and Sharon hit the papers, looking for sales. Lucy and she went shopping while Gary and Clarence shared the news of their trips. Gary had a trust distribution and told Sharon to 'go for it'. He'd never learn.

She came back to the motel telling him how much she'd saved on this and on that. All he wanted to know was how much all the 'savings' had cost them.

Ron and Linda showed up the afternoon of the 31st. The next morning she drug Ron to a furniture store and outfitted what she called a 'second class' home with 'first class' Ethan Allen furniture. They checked with Sun Country/Great American and learned that their homes had been delivered and installed. They arranged for the furniture deliveries for Tuesday and headed to Sun Valley.

Sun Valley is located at the 294 exits on I-40 just 8 miles from the downtown Holbrook exit. They toured their new homes. Gary and Sharon had lived in a doublewide before, but this new home was so much more than what they'd owned before. It had 2"x6" studs in the exterior walls and real dry wall throughout. The family room was sub-divided to give Gary a small office and Sharon could convert the den to a sewing room. They had opted for stair steps to the basement. The basement was a huge bare space, 30'x54' with no columns. "Perfect," Gary thought, "Sharon can use the large den for her sewing room and we can use the entire basement as a family room."

Clarence and Lucy seemed happy enough with their home, but Ron and Linda were noncommittal. They all drove to Holbrook and got a motel for the evening after Gary unloaded the U-Haul with their goods from storage into the basement. Lucy, Linda and Sharon went shopping for kitchen items and the men stayed at the motel.

"Wow," Gary said, "They sure have changed these homes since the last one I owned."

"In what way?" Clarence asked.

"Our first home back in Iowa," Gary explained, "Had thin wood paneling on the walls and just felt cheap. This home has drywall, some halfway decent carpet on the floor and just seems like a home."

"What in the hell am I going to do with all of that basement space?" Ron asked.

"I forgot that you weren't used to living in a home with a basement Ron," Gary replied. "Sharon is going to use the den for her sewing room and I'm going to use that small office adjacent for my computer room. I'm going to put in a family room in the basement."

"How are you going to finish it off?" Ron asked.

"I thought that I'd put up furring strips on the walls and put in knotty pine car siding," Gary replied. "There is room for a bar and a bumper pool table and even a large storage room. I'm not sure just yet, but I'll find a use for the space."

"Why knotty pine?" Ron asked, "Why not wood paneling?"

"No reason really," Gary answered, "Probably because we had knotty pine car siding in our basement at home when I was growing up."

"I think that paneling would look nicer and be a whole lot cheaper," Ron suggested.

"Well if so," Gary acknowledged, "That's what I'll do. I know that putting in the knotty pine is a lot more work."

"Yeah, and we aren't as young as we used to be either," Clarence offered. "I'm definitely going with paneling."

"I figured that it would give us something to do finishing off these basements," Gary said, "We can get a ramset and put up 2"x2" furring and put in the wall covering ourselves. That will save us a bunch of money."

"After seeing that basement," Ron grouched, "I don't know why I ever let you talk me into a storm shelter. Besides, didn't you pick Holbrook because we wouldn't have to worry about hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornados, tsunamis and volcanoes?"

"You forgot the forest fires and thunderstorms," Clarence joked.

"Them, too," Ron added.

"Actually, I had a storm of a different type in mind," Gary admitted. "Don't you guys ever watch the news? First Ariel Sharon killed that Hamas leader in the wheel chair; I can never remember his name, Rassin I think. A month later, he killed that new leader, Rantisi. Then, just last week, he killed Yasser Arafat.

"This guy is just plain stupid. What does he think that he can cow the Palestinians into submission? After he killed Rantisi, the Palestinians kept their promise and carried out those 100 attacks. With him taking out Arafat, I think that the Palestinians are going to come to the US next. They blame us for all three killings."

"Do you really think we have anything to worry about Gary?" Clarence asked.

"You know, I just don't know anymore," Gary said, "But after the big one that hit Palmdale, I can believe that anything can happen. Beside, I'm halfway there to having my shelter stocked. I still have all those beans and rice we didn't eat."

"And a generator," Clarence said.

"Gave the generator to Lorrie," Gary announced. "I'm going to mount a 30kw propane powered unit with an automatic transfer switch. I'm going to put in a big propane tank, too."

"Now you're talking my language," Ron said, "How big of a tank did you have in mind?"

"I'm not sure," Gary replied, "The 30kw standby generator uses about for 1.9 to 4.4 gallons per hour."

"A 500-gallon tank would be plenty for the house and for your generator," Ron suggested.

"Really? I was thinking more like a 5,500-gallon tank," Gary retorted.

"Fifty five hundred gallons?" Ron nearly choked, "Do you have any idea how much a

5,500-gallon tank would cost you?”

“No, how much?” Gary asked.

“Let’s put it this way partner,” Ron laughed, “You’d have to mortgage your home. Now, you might be able to find a used 2,000-gallon tank for a reasonable price, say \$5,000.”

Ron made that announcement just as Gary was taking a mouthful of coffee. Bad move Ron! When Gary finally quit choking, and some color returned to his face, he could only sputter.

“I’ll find a way to do it a lot cheaper than that Ron,” he protested.

Gary did, too. So far, they just had 2 25-gallon bottles to supply their furnace and kitchen stove. He got Sharon to reading the want ads and low and behold, he found a 5,500-gallon tank for sale by the owner.

Companies that bought used tanks didn’t give much for them because they had to get the safety relief valve replaced and were a general pain in the butt. But, they sure got enough for them once they were ready to go. Gary contacted the owner and dickered with the guy. The 5,500-gallon tank would have gone for \$7,500 from a dealer, but he got it for \$5,000.

The new safety relief valve cost a bit, but obviously the dealers were charging a lot for their trouble. Besides, they had to give warranties on their used tanks and Gary bought his as is. It pressure tested just fine, too.

By the end of the year, Gary and Sharon had managed to buy another of the used 5,500-gallon tanks for \$5,000 plus the transportation and pressure test and new valve. They had 15,000-gallons of storage (desert fill) and had spent less than \$11,000. Ron and Clarence had each also bought a single, used 550-gallon tank. Gary wasn’t satisfied, but he was getting there.

The three 5-acre lots were next to each other and the men put up 3 strands of barbed wire and fenced off a joined area of about 7½-acres. They had a contractor come in and grade the chaparral off the 7½ acres and planted grass. They then bought 3 feeder calves at an auction and had them hauled to their pasture. Gary used some PVC pipe and ran a water line to the pasture and installed a stock tank. The three of them erected a pole shed that really wasn’t more than a cover and windbreak, but the cattle didn’t know the difference, or if they did, hadn’t said.

Halfway around the world in the Middle East, things were heating up. In Iraq, the minor insurrection of earlier in the year had turned into nearly a full-scale war, far worse than the Americans had fought 1½ years before. Turning over governing to local authorities hadn’t made things better, the various factions all blamed the US for their troubles and

while the majority of Iraqis had welcome the US invasion previously, it was a bumpy, downhill ride.

Only the US and Britain were still there and it looked like Blair was going to have to pull out to keep his job. In Israel, Ariel Sharon had a stroke and was a vegetable. Syria was making noises like it didn't really care if the US was in Iraq or not, they were preparing to join the Palestinians and attack Israel.

Bush had won reelection only by the narrowest of margins. His greatest asset had been John Kerry. Bush would not have won had not Kerry been thoroughly discredited with respect to his Vietnam War medals. Bush and Cheney kept on lying about their second Amendment position, swaying some voters.

Sales of high capacity magazines hit record highs in the months following the sunset of the assault weapons ban. All of a sudden, the hard-to-find and expensive GI surplus M-14 magazines were available for as little as \$25. Gary threw caution to the wind and loaded up on them. Who knew how long the sunset would last?

Not living in California had its advantages too. At last free of the nincompoop California ban everything laws, Gary was dividing his money between buying M1A's, filling the two propane tanks and buying survival rations.

Since he'd changed his mind and gone with a 30kw generator, and it was sitting on a pad behind his house, if Ron and Clarence were satisfied with the single LP tank that was fine with Gary. Ron bought a FAL and Gary sold him his stainless Mini-14 for Linda. Clarence had followed Ron's lead and gone with the DSA FAL, too. At least both of them had seen the wisdom of a standby generator when a lightning strike towards Holbrook knocked out power for 31 hours. They had gone with 20kw generators because the maximum power decreased by about 3.5% for each 1,000 feet above sea level. Gary's generator was derated 4% for every 1,000' above 500' and could only put out ~75% or 187.5/93.75 amps at their altitude for the 120/240 volt levels. It wasn't a problem; they had a 200 amp service panel and matching ATS.

Gary found that if he didn't push his pals and lead by example, they would come around sooner or later. The day that Ariel Sharon had his stroke, for example, all three men placed large orders with Walton Feeds for their storm shelters. They each bought 2 one-year deluxe food storage units and even went for the vitamins Walton's sold. It took 2 months for the food to arrive and in the interim they added oil, sugar and other essentials like Ron's sweet and low and lots of coffee and filters. A trip to the Res took care of their cigarette needs at an affordable price.

Ron pointed out that the biggest problem they'd had when the earthquake hit was water. He figured that they needed 30 gallons a day for the toilets, 2 gallons a day to drink and another 8 gallons a day for dishwashing and laundry. Even if they limited the flushing to the minimum, they would need at least 20 gallons of water a day. To absolutely guarantee a year's worth of water, they would need 15,000-gallon water tanks. That was a real

shocker. They decided to trust to luck and go with 7,500-gallon tanks. They could always find a way to power the electric well pump for the development.

It took the three men into early summer of 2005 before they had everything the way they wanted it. Water tanks, propane tanks, food, furnishings for the storm shelters, appliances for the shelters and an intercom system connecting the three shelters. Every time they heard on the news of another aftershock in Palmdale their motivation improved.

Every time the Israelis killed another group of Palestinians their motivation improved even more. Every time the Palestinians bombed another Israeli bus their motivation improved two notches. Yes sir, CNN was motivating the three old men pretty damn good. If the LA Lakers were just half as motivated, they would have another winning season.

On the 4th of July, Ron and Linda invited the other two couples over for a barbeque.

“Anyone remember what they were doing a year ago today?” Gary asked.

“Sitting your backyard in Palmdale,” Clarence announced.

“And staring at the pile of rubble that you used to call home,” Ron added.

“We sure have come a long way in that year,” Gary said. “New homes, all of us prepared for a change and the world going to hell in a hand cart.”

“Can you believe a Palestinian was actually able to get into the Knesset and blow it up?” Clarence asked.

“I’ve been saying for years that Sharon was pushing the Palestinians too hard,” Gary answered, “And look what it got him. A stroke leaving him a vegetable. Of course if that war in Iraq gets any worse, they’re going to impeach Bush, too.”

“Blair says that they’re pulling out,” Ron said.

“Does that really surprise you Ron?” Gary asked. “The British have been raising hell with Blair since before the war started. I think that it was inevitable.”

“Gary, did you hear that the UN still refused to take over for the US in Iraq?” Clarence asked.

“Yep. Doesn’t surprise me one bit, either,” Gary replied, “The UN wants it all nice and peaceful before they’ll risk sending people in. So, everyone and his brother are making sure it isn’t peaceful. It keeps the UN out. Do you know what worries me?”

“Do tell,” Clarence laughed, “I thought everything worried you.”

“What worries me,” Gary said ignoring Clarence “Is that Derek has been back from Kosovo a year come September. They could call his unit up and send them to Iraq. What’s the death toll now, 2,000?”

“Give or take,” Ron said, “Almost all of that since his highness announced the war was over.”

“The dork reenlisted in October of 2003 for 4 years, too,” Gary said. “He called me one-time from Kosovo back before the quake. Said he had the chicken plates but bitched because they weighed 20 pounds. Asked him if he’d had to fire his rifle at anyone. Told me the closest he got was to be locked and loaded and pointed, safety off. Told me some guy showed up in a crowd with an AK and the crowd took it away from the guy and literally beat him to death.”

“Did he see that?” Clarence asked.

“Don’t know Clarence, but I think so,” Gary answered. “He doesn’t like to talk about it much and I just don’t ask.”

“What does Derek think about what’s going on?” Clarence asked.

“He seems to think that it’s even money that TSHTF before he gets called up to go to Iraq,” Gary said.

“Oh? In what way?” Ron asked.

“He said that Homeland Security is a joke,” Gary said. “People can get across the border like water through a sieve. Especially from Mexico.”

“He isn’t wrong about that partner,” Ron chuckled. “Of course I don’t know what’s worse, our porous borders or the amount of money that the US sends to Israel. That just inflames the situation over there.”

“True,” Clarence said, “But even if the US would stop supporting Israel it’s too late to change the attitude of all of those Muslims.”

“You’re right Clarence,” Gary said, “But water through a sieve? I just wonder how many hundreds or thousands of those camel jockeys are over here already set to strike?”

“Doesn’t matter partner,” Ron injected, “The way you have us prepared we can weather just about any storm that comes along; human or otherwise.”

“We could,” Gary said, “If you two jerks would just put in some more propane tanks.”

“I suppose you’re right Gar-Bear,” Ron admitted, “Happen to know where we can get some more used tanks?”

“Dang, I thought that you’d never ask,” Gary laughed. “You want 2 5,500 tanks each, the same as I have?”

“At \$5,000 each plus freight, inspection and a new valve?” Clarence asked.

“Yep.” Gary replied.

“Why do I get the impression that we’re being set up for something?” Ron asked.

“Do you want the tanks or not?” Gary pressed.

“I guess so,” Ron said, “How about you Clarence?”

“I’m in Ron,” Clarence replied.

“Good, you can each make me out a check for \$13,500,” Gary laughed, “You’ll have the tanks tomorrow.”

“But how?” Clarence started to say.

“You SOB! You’ve been sand bagging us,” Ron said. “You already have the tanks.”

Gary laughed. “Dealer over in Flagstaff got in several truckloads of used tanks,” he explained. “I made him an offer on 18 of them. He replaced the valves and had the tanks certified. He called me last week. They’re ready to be delivered.”

“You were running a pretty big risk that we’d agree to buy them weren’t you?” Clarence asked.

“Nope,” Gary said, “Everyone should have a lot of propane stored. I got a 30kw generator and at 50% output it burns 2.7gph. That’s about 24 thousand gallons per year.

“It’s going to cost a bunch to fill all those tanks,” Clarence suggested.

“Wrong again,” Gary grinned, “I’ve bought so much propane from the distributor that I get wholesale prices.”

“Five thousand gallons of propane costs a lot Gar-Bear, even at wholesale prices,” Ron pointed out.

The dealer delivered the tanks the next day, installed the cradles and plumbed the tanks together using flexible high-pressure hoses. Gary and Sharon had bought a third tank. The day after a 3,000-gallon delivery truck pulled in and started filling 2 tanks for Ron and 2 tanks for Clarence. He continued until each tank held 5,000 gallons and filled Gary’s new tank and topped off Gary’s original tanks.

The shelters had an under-the-counter, half-height electric hot water heater and one of those combination stove, oven, refrigerator and sink appliances you often find in motels with kitchenettes. There was also a stool plus a showerhead over a floor drain. Gary had gone a bit overboard on the size of the things, and they all kept their deep freezers in the shelter. He had a few extra things in his shelter, like his ham radios and a gun rack.

They had put in some used furniture that they had picked up at Goodwill in Phoenix. It was plenty good for a shelter. Rather than finish the basements, the men had opted to spend the money on their shelters. There would be plenty of time to finish the basements. They did put in steel doors to the stairwells to the shelters, however. The doors opened into the basement and had two 2"x6" crossbars to keep them closed. There were blast doors into the shelters and air filters from the place in Utah and they could even weather a nuclear storm if it came to that.

Derek called the following weekend. His unit had advance notice that they would be getting orders for Iraq. Gary asked when they were going. October, the same as the previous year, Derek told him. But they were going to Fort Irwin for some desert training, then to Fort Lewis for MP training and from there straight to Iraq for 12 months.

Could they get to Arizona for Labor Day, Gary asked. They would make it a point, Derek promised. They visited a little longer then Derek had to put Elizabeth to bed or something and ended the call.

"Well," Gary thought, "So much for 50-50 chance of going to Iraq. Damn that George Bush and his war anyhow."

Gary sometimes tended to get a little tiny bit grumpy. Derek's call set him off. He was damning this and damning that and generally making a nuisance of himself. Sharon finally pried it out of him that Derek had orders for Iraq. That explained that, Gary was just plain scared. She tried to reassure him that Derek would be ok, but he wouldn't listen. She called Linda and told her what was up with Gary; maybe Ron could get him calmed down.

"Hey partner," Ron said, "What's new?"

"Screw George Bush," Gary replied.

"Whoa, what's up with you partner?" Ron pressed.

"That flippin' war was supposed to be over a long time ago," Gary rambled on, "Now Derek got orders to go to Iraq and I just know he won't be coming back in one piece."

"He made it through Kosovo ok," Ron assured Gary, "He'll be all right."

“I don’t know Ron,” Gary said, “I’ve got this sinking feeling in my gut.”

“You’re scared Gary,” Ron said, “You have every right to be scared. But, didn’t you say he was a tank gunner?”

“Yes, he’s a gunner on the Commander’s tank,” Gary said.

“I can’t think of a safer place to be than inside of an Abrams tank,” Ron said. “RPG’s just bounce off of them.”

“Well maybe,” Gary said, “But you know those Iraqis even killed a couple of guys in a tank.”

“Gary, worry about something you have control over,” Ron suggested, “Worrying about something you can’t control will just get you boozed up.”

“I guess you’re right Ronald,” Gary said, “But I don’t have to like it.”

July and August passed in the blink of an eye. The day before Labor Day, Derek, Mary, Elizabeth, Joshua, Thomas and surprise, surprise, DJ showed up. They had plenty of room in their new home and they made everyone comfortable. They had a big blowout planned for the next day. Gary made it a point not to bring up Derek’s pending year of duty in Iraq. They’d talk about it before Derek left, but there was no sense stirring things up at the moment. They were grandchildren to play with.

After The Big One – Chapter 2 – 100 Unique Reprisals

What nobody realized was that the Hamas threatened *100 unique reprisals* included 100 against Israel and 100 against the US. It had taken Hamas 16 months to sneak the 100 would be bombers into the US together with people to support them and the explosives.

There were no suitcase nukes, no Ricin, no Sarin gas, just 500 kilos of Semtex, 500 assorted detonators and 100 push button activators. The Palestinians choose large celebrations where they could blend in with the crowd, move into a large group of people and detonate their 5-kilogram bombs. With any luck, thousands of Americans would pay for supporting Israel.

Five kilos of Semtex is a lot of explosives. When those explosives were crammed full of nails, the explosion and resulting carnage was guaranteed to please even the most ardent American hater; especially if the explosives were set off in a large crowd.

Homeland Security must have suspected something was up, the day before Labor Day they raised the Threat Level to Orange. All that accomplished was to create long lines at airports, the terrorists were already in place.

Precisely at 3pm EDT, 100 bombs at 100 celebrations in 100 cities exploded. The explosives, by themselves, would have caused over 1,000 deaths. Aided by the hundreds of nails implanted in the Semtex, the bombs killed over 7,500 Americans and wounded twice, sometimes three times, as many.

The explosives were carefully molded to the bodies of the 100 Palestinians. The detonator concealed in their pants pocket. A loose fitting shirt was all it took to conceal the explosives. The news hit the cable news channels within minutes and soon TV and radio could talk about nothing else. The death toll was nearly 3 times that of 9/11/01. Within minutes, Senator Kennedy and Senator Clinton appeared on TV demanding an American response.

Dubya was having a pretty good day up to that point. That all changed around 2:09 CDT. The Secret Service went into overdrive. That was the first clue. An aide came to him with the news. We were way beyond the clue stage now. The aide told him that suicide bombers had exploded bombs at Labor Day celebrations in several cities.

The count was 13 cities and rising. Within an hour, they had a final count, 100 bombs at 100 celebrations in 100 cities. The death toll was estimated over 7,000 and the injured over 16,000. Both numbers were still rising as the authorities in the affected cities continued to work their way through the dead and injured. Dubya immediately ordered Air Force One prepped for takeoff. He was returning to Washington.

Despite what some people think, the body of a suicide bomber doesn't just go poof and

disappear in the explosion. By the time that Dubya got back to DC, the FBI had identified two of the 100 bombers as being Palestinians with suspected links to Hamas.

In the coming days as the body count became firm and the victims were identified, the FBI had managed to identify about a third of the bombers. They were all Palestinians and some had known links to Hamas. The President was forming a plan and it sure didn't look good for the Palestinians either. For that matter, George was beginning to have second thoughts about America's support of the Israelis, too.

Sharon's campaign to eliminate Hamas leaders and then Arafat was being condemned worldwide. The fact that the Palestinians had bombed the Knesset and Sharon had a stroke hadn't really reduced the condemnation by much, especially when his successor launched an attack against the refugee camp that the bomber had come from and killed and wounded several hundred Palestinians.

You don't fight a fire with gasoline. Ask the French. In the early morning hours of All Saints' Day, November 1, 1954, FLN launched attacks in various parts of Algeria against military installations, police posts, warehouses, communications facilities, and public utilities. From Cairo, the FLN broadcast a proclamation calling on Muslims in Algeria to join in a national struggle for the *restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic, and social, within the framework of the principles of Islam.*

The French minister of interior, socialist François Mitterrand, responded sharply that *the only possible negotiation is war.* It was the reaction of Premier Pierre Mendès-France, who only a few months before had completed the liquidation of France's empire in Indochina that set the tone of French policy for the next five years. How had the French fought the Algerians? The French Foreign Legion, fresh from its defeat at Dien Bien Phu, mapped the structure of the cells of the FLN and systematically destroyed the organization. On July 5, 1962, Algeria gained its independence.

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, George Santayana had said. Someone apparently forgot to tell the Israelis. They tried to destroy Hamas, the PLO and the Palestinian Authority by killing the leaders. What's that other expression, you know, the one from the Bible? *He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword* [Matthew 26:52]. President Bush, in failing to at least criticize Israel for the killings of Rassin, Rantisi and Arafat, had made the US a target.

George wanted to give the Palestinians a lesson, a big lesson. He wanted to nuke them and didn't really give a red rats butt if that killed a few Israelis either. But, world opinion would never allow him to nuke the Palestinians. He didn't have any troops to spare to take on the Palestinians either.

The US had troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and was spread too thin as it was. Bush was tired of the war on terrorism and the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq. He had resisted withdrawing American troops from Iraq because that action would be compared

to the withdrawal of American troops from Somalia and Iraq would indeed become his Vietnam.

On the other hand, the resistance to the war in Iraq in the US had grown to the point that he was starting to lose his options. American disapproval of his handling of the war had reached almost 70% in the most recent Gallup poll. He ordered the American troops withdrawn from Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, Kosovo, Haiti, Korea, Japan and Europe. The ink hadn't dried on the order before someone leaked it to Fox News. George notified the networks that he would be making a national address at 9pm eastern.

My fellow Americans, I mourn, indeed the entire nation mourns, the loss of life that occurred around our country yesterday. I have today ordered our troops withdrawn from Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, Kosovo, Haiti, Korea, Japan and Europe. I have ordered our strategic mobility forces to deploy and begin the return of our troops and equipment. This will not happen overnight. We are coming home.

In Afghanistan, we removed a terrorist government, replaced it with a stable, democratic government and established a highly trained, competent Army. We will be transferring a portion of our material to the Afghans to allow them to continue the fight against terrorism. In Iraq, we removed a despot from power and formed a fledgling democratic government. One of the principles laid down by our founding fathers was religious freedom. The current conflict in Iraq is in the nature of a civil war between rival religious factions. Our principles prohibit us from favoring one religion over another. Our accomplishments in Iraq are many. However, I have no choice; an orderly withdrawal of the men and women of our armed forces has begun.

There is no longer any reason for the United States to maintain armed forces abroad. We have to restore order at home and implement steps that will preclude another 9/11 or another Labor Day Massacre. Accordingly, I will present to Congress legislation aimed at strengthening the Patriot Act. Elements of our armed forces will be used to seal the borders of this country.

I am evaluating the most appropriate response to yesterday's events. The FBI has tentatively identified some the 100 suicide bombers as members of or being associated with the Palestinian terrorist organization, Hamas. Whatever our response, I can assure you that it will be proportionate to the attack on our beloved country.

I have also issued orders that National Guard units which were being activated for service in Afghanistan and Iraq be reassigned to border patrol duties. We will secure this country against further terrorist threats at all costs.

Secretary Ridge today offered his resignation. I have reluctantly accepted. I commend Secretary Ridge on a job well done in organizing the Department of Homeland Security. You may rest assured that an equally qualified individual will be selected to carry on Secretary Ridge's fine job.

The 9/11 Commission recommended the establishment of an organization like Great Britain's MI-5. The Congress rejected that recommendation. I stand ready to approve the legislation and a revised Bill will be introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate within days. Never again will terrorists be allowed to strike out at our country.

Join Laura and me as we mourn this tragedy. May God Bless the dead and injured. God Bless America.

The three old men and Derek had gathered to listen to the broadcast at Ron and Linda's. You could have heard a pin drop at the end of President's Bush's speech. Clarence was the first to speak.

"Derek," he said, "It doesn't sound like you will be going to Iraq."

"Clarence," Derek said, "I've served in Korea and in Kosovo. Believe me, Bush is not doing the world a favor by withdrawing our forces from around the world."

"You aren't going and that's all I care about," Gary said. "It's about time that we stopped being the world's policeman."

"Dad it's not that simple," Derek insisted, "I've seen the military forces of other countries. In Kosovo we served with elements of the French Foreign Legion, the Greek Army and the Italian Carabinieri. The French have lost their edge; the Greeks were downright brutal and the Carabinieri don't know whether they're policemen or military."

"At least the UN is going to be forced to get off its dead butt and help resolve some of these world crises," Ron injected.

"Mr. Green," Derek said, "I wouldn't be surprised if the UN declares the US to be a rogue nation and attempts to initiate action against us."

"They wouldn't dare," Gary suggested.

"I agree with Derek," Clarence said, "I think it's going to get a whole lot worse before it gets better."

Gary and Sharon bought three more propane tanks and slowly had them filled. They also ordered 15 additional one year deluxe food supplies from Walton Feed.

It took over three months to return American troops to the US. Strangely, the insurrection in Iraq waned ever so slightly and the US was able to make a reasonably orderly withdrawal. Another 300 plus American lives were lost in Iraq, but this was far less than military estimates of the loss of life had we stayed.

The UN was hopelessly deadlocked. They couldn't agree on sending UN forces to Iraq or to Afghanistan. A motion introduced in the Security Council to censure the US re-

ceived 13 favorable votes, one abstention (Great Britain) and one veto (United States). President Bush had nominated a successor for Secretary Ridge and the Senate had rejected the nominee.

The lone remaining Naval Strike Group was in the Med and centered on the carrier USS Ronald Reagan. Just before sailing for home, the Reagan launched a massive air strike. The F/A-18's bombed the Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza and Palestine. Limited to conventional bombs, mostly CBU's, the Navy didn't totally destroy the camps, but the loss of life was horrific.

George's response had been proportional all right; the proportion was 10 to 1. A single F/A-18 had special orders. It dropped its entire bomb load on the Israelis. The US immediately made a public announcement, citing an unspecified failure of the plane's navigational system and expressed regret for the loss of life to Israeli citizens. The USS Reagan and its strike group sailed for home.

As the strike group cleared the Suez Canal, it was attacked by elements of Egypt's Naval and Air Forces. The Egyptian forces were quickly destroyed, but the attack forewarned of things to come. The UN immediately attempted to censure the US for the bombing of the refugee camps, Israel and for destroying the elements of the Egyptian armed forces.

The vote in the Security Council was the same, 13-1-1. President Bush ordered all UN delegates from US soil citing security concerns. In protest, every country with representation in the US recalled its Ambassadors for consultations. The clash of sabers and rumblings of the rest of the world's military forces being mobilized could be heard all the way to Washington. The USS Reagan returned to its homeport of San Diego.

Over the course of the next months the world prepared to go to war. The British Parliament declared that the United Kingdom was henceforth a neutral nation and they withdrew from NATO. Tony Blair resigned at Prime Minister in response to the vote.

The UN was hastily reformed and began meeting in Brussels, Belgium. The US didn't announce that it was withdrawing from NATO, but with all American troops back in the US, US withdrawal was seen as de facto. The US Commander in Chief of NATO had announced his retirement and he, together with his staff, returned to the US, too. The US refused to participate in the reformed UN. An effort to impeach George Bush failed by a single vote in the House.

Valentine's Day 2006 in Sun Valley found the three old geezers glued to the TV. The news was coming faster and faster as FOX, CNN and the other news organizations reported on the growing world crises.

"It sure is nice that Derek got stationed so close to us," Clarence said, "I really like that boy."

"It's danged hot down there at Ft. Huachuca in summer, I'd bet," Ron opined.

"At least there's air conditioning in that tank of his," Gary said. "Can you believe the way TSHTF? Bush sure got even with those Palestinians. Got even with the Israelis, too."

"What do you mean?" Clarence asked.

"You don't really believe that that F/A-18 actually had an unspecified failure of its navigational system, do you?" Gary asked. "Payback is a bitch."

"I agree partner," Ron laughed, "It was about time that the US made a statement condemning Israel. What a statement!"

"The only thing is, we're going to war," Gary said, "On American soil. Has everyone finished their preparations?"

"I'm set partner," Ron said, "Had the propane tanks topped off yesterday. They did Clarence's too. He and I both ordered more food from Walton Feed, too. We both got grain mills and Katadyn water filters just in case. Are you going to order more food?"

"I already have," Gary announced. "I ordered 15 deluxe one-year units."

"Why so much?" Clarence asked.

"I'm going to call my family together," Gary said. "It will be tight, but if we have to, Sharon and I have decided to rent some mobile homes and set them on the property. We're getting Lorrie and Amy and their families here from California and Damon and his kids here from Iowa. Mary and the 3 kids are already on their way. We still have some loose ends like generators for the trailers and the like, but my family is almost ready."

"I wonder if Linda and I should do the same." Ron thought out loud.

"I would recommend that you do Ron," Gary suggested, "The war could break out at any moment."

"Maybe I should order some extra ammo from Ammoman," Clarence announced.

"Good idea Clarence, but you can get it just as cheap and a whole lot faster right here in Arizona," Gary responded.

"How would you know?" Ron asked.

"I laid in 50 cases each of .308 NATO and .223 NATO last month," Gary reported. "If I have the money, I'm going to buy more. It all depends on what the situation is with the mobile homes."

The United States Military Industrial Complex had been working 24/7 turning out munitions for Iraq and Afghanistan. The President didn't halt the purchasing just because all of the troops came home. He increased the orders. He took the money for the purchases from every source he could find. The military was working around the clock repairing the battle weary equipment it had brought home from around the world.

Troops were stationed along our entire borders with Canada and Mexico. In record time, the Abrams tanks were all brought up to M1A2SEP standards. Projected to take five years, the refit was completed in five months. Arsenals around the country were filled to overflowing with munitions.

When the UN finally voted to censure the US and declared it to be a rogue nation, President Bush, using powers granted him in the revised Patriot Act, halted International Air and Ship movements. All American airports and ports-of-call were closed to international traffic.

The threat Level was Red and the Defense Condition was at DEFCON 3. The US prepared 12 additional spy satellites and an entirely new GPS satellite system for launch if necessary. The spending of US dollars at home had been a shot in the arm to the US economy. Many companies were reporting record profits and the Dow, tempered by the threat of war, hovered around 11,000.

Gary and Sharon ended up buying some used 12'x60' mobile homes. They were old and worn, but affordable. They put in 4 trailers, all purchased for under \$10,000 each and squeaked out enough money to put a 12kw, propane powered RV generator in each along with 3,300 gallon tanks.

All of their kids were in Sun Valley on the eve of the war. Clarence and Lucy didn't have any children to bring to Sun Valley. Ron and Linda persuaded Jennifer and Brenda and their families to move to Sun Valley, but John and Kevin stubbornly stayed in LA. Paula and her husband were 'thinking it over'. Just in case, Ron and Linda added 3 of the same 12'x60' mobile homes, similarly equipped as those Gary and Sharon set up for their kids.

Gary contacted the dealer in Flagstaff who had the used propane tanks and purchased 12 more, three for each trailer. They cost him the same as those he had acquired and resold to Ron and Clarence. He had used his profit on that transaction to buy 1 extra M1A, a Super Match, and the recovered principal to buy a Tac-50 and several cases of Hornady 750gr A-MAX Match. The food had arrived from Walton Feed and was stored in their otherwise empty basement. Although their cash was running low and their credit was extended to the max, Gary and Sharon bought more ammunition and weapons. Ron and Linda ordered more food from Walton Feed.

The UN declared that a police action was necessary to bring President George Bush to justice for war crimes against the Iraqis, Palestinians and Israelis. A Gallup poll, taken

just hours after the announcement hit the news, showed that 78% of Americans plus or minus 3% were in favor of telling the UN to 'shove it', as one commentator reported.

Only a few politicians were particularly vocal about the President's actions. Their names were Kennedy, Clinton, Schumer, Kerry, Boxer, Feinstein, Byrd and Gephardt. Noticeably absent were the names Daschle and McCain and a litany of House members who otherwise would have been screaming at the top of their lungs.

All of America's submarines were at sea. The boomers had taken their positions and were prepared to respond in the event that the war went nuclear. Every attack submarine was positioned to repel an invasion before it even got close to the United States. The diesel-powered carriers had been brought from mothballs and quickly refitted. Even the 4 Iowa class battleships, icons of a forgotten age, were re-commissioned and deployed. The #2 turret of the Iowa was rebuilt and new powder supplied for all four of the ships' 16" guns. The most powerful nation on the earth was prepared to fight the remainder of the world.

Invading the United States of America was a risky proposition at best. The combined fleets of all of the participating nations of the UN couldn't hold a candle to the power of the American Fleet. Our attack submarines were outfitted with extra food and munitions and submarine re-supply ships had sailed to the 200-mile limit with the carrier battle groups.

Fearing the worst, President Bush issued an Executive Order rescinding all firearms acts except the NFA, the Order was immediately challenged by Senator Ted Kennedy. The BATF was ordered to turn a blind eye to Americans arming themselves. The order was not well received, especially in California, Maryland and Illinois.

When the Executive Order made headline news, Gary, Ron and Clarence immediately made a trip to Phoenix. It took nearly every penny of their money and a full day to arrange for the installation of suppressors on Gary's Tac-50 and Super Match; and, the 2 FAL's, by a less than honest gun dealer. They also acquired 3 suppressed Ruger Mark II's with the integral suppressors. It just took a lot of extra cash.

The Tac-50 had the Night Force 12-42x56mm Mil Dot scope and Gary went with the Jet Suppressor for that rifle. The Super Match had a Night Force 8.5-32x56mm Mil Dot scope and he selected a Surefire Quick Attach suppressor with the flashhider adapter.

Several nations refused to participate in the police action against the US, notably Japan, Sweden, Norway and some of the former Warsaw pact countries. These countries declared themselves to be neutral, joining the Swiss and Great Britain. The principal nations leading the invasion were Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Russia and China. A host of Arab nations supplied troops from their pitiful armed forces in support of the large countries.

There weren't enough Navy ships by any stretch of the imagination to invade the United States and every manner of vessel including crude tankers and container ships were thrown into the mix. American merchant ships caught in foreign ports were seized, their crews imprisoned and the vessels used in the UN's war effort. Thus it came about that on April 1, 2007 a fleet of nearly 7,000 vessels set sail for the United States from ports around the world.

The Russians launched killer satellites and took out the American spy satellites and GPS system. Within 48 hours, the US had launched the 12 new spy satellites and the new GPS system. It was an unbelievable task bringing the new satellites on line, but somehow it was done quickly. ComSubPac had positioned his fleet of attack submarines to intercept the invading force about half way between Hawaii and Midway Island.

The replacement satellites came online in time for him to direct his command to attack the Chinese forces. Every torpedo found its mark. Scores of ships sank under the barrage of torpedoes. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers, sailors and marines died for the glory of China and the UN. Yet the remaining armada continued toward the US. The Los Angeles class submarines withdrew to be re-supplied and attack again.

ComSubLant positioned his fleet over the mid Atlantic trench. All but 2 of his fleets' torpedoes found their mark. The submarines withdrew at flank speed to resupply. CinCLant ordered the Atlantic carrier task groups moved to 400 hundred miles off the American coast. The Pacific submarine fleet, re-supplied with Mark-48 ADCAPs moved once again to attack the Chinese fleet, which also carried North Korean troops and troops from Vietnam and other far eastern countries. CinCPac ordered the Pacific carrier task groups to a line just west of Hawaii.

The US used every weapon, except nuclear weapons, at its disposal to defeat the invading forces. Over ½ of the invading force's ships got past the submarine barrier and the fierce resistance offered by the Carrier Strike Groups. If one considers the Battle of Midway, one recalls that 3 US carriers sunk 4 Japanese carriers and turned a Japanese armada of over 300 ships.

Historians have questioned Yamamoto's withdrawal of the Japanese fleet; the Americans were down to 2 carriers and few aircraft. Surely if the Japanese had come on, they might have succeeded. The Chinese came on, not repeating Yamamoto's perceived error. The American Fleet was forced to sail for the US to re-supply.

In the Atlantic, the story was much the same. Some ships took a lot of sinking, exhausting the Harpoon missiles and Mark-48's. Carriers carry a lot of bombs, but not an inexhaustible supply. Eventually the Atlantic Fleet was also required to withdraw for re-supply, having used their stores and the stores aboard the supply ships. America braced for the invasion.

The US was at DEFCON 2. President Bush was at Cheyenne Mountain and the Congress had been moved to the hastily refurnished and re-supplied Greenbrier Hotel. The

FBI, for all of its strengths, had failed to track down all of the support personnel for the bombers from the Labor Day Massacre. Those individuals, initially numbering in the hundreds, still numbered in the tens.

They had gone to ground and using their false identities tried to blend into American society. All the while they prepared, buying a 5-gallon can of diesel or a small bag of fertilizer at Target or Walmart. Slowly accumulating the weapons for a second strike. They had spare detonators, the hardest item to come by, and Tovex. The formula for the fuel oil/nitrate fertilizer mix was not that complicated and they were well schooled. They learned English, worked in mundane jobs, accumulated explosives and waited.

In Sun Valley the three old men had installed an underground diesel tank holding a scant 4,000-gallons of stabilized #2 diesel fuel. They had traded in their cars for some used diesel powered pickups that came complete with rifle racks in the rear windows.

Ronald managed to pick up a supply of fuse and blasting caps, no one knew from where and he wasn't talking. In his little shop in the garage, built right over his storm shelter, he fashioned 6" lengths of threaded galvanized 1½" pipe, the cap on one end screwed on tightly and the cap for the other end drilled to allow a fuse to protrude. He, too, had a small supply of the new Tovex. They had a few bags of fertilizer, supposedly for their pasture; the 46-0-0 fertilizer was dangerous to use on the field because it burned the grass, but it was a powerful explosive.

It was warming up in Arizona in late June 2007. The Navy hadn't done as well as the three men expected. Even the Air Force, flying nonstop missions, hadn't prevented the invaders from arriving at our shores. Everyone in Sun Valley was ready for the coming war. Well, as ready any anyone could be under the circumstances.

Derek had made it to Sun Valley in May for a long weekend. His active duty had been extended indefinitely. His unit was stationed Ft. Huachuca, guarding a section of the US-Mexico border. It was obvious he was worried.

Gary had made an unusual find at a pawnshop in Mesa. It was a genuine Vietnam era Randall knife. He gave the knife to Derek and told him that he didn't give a red rat's rump about regulations, find somewhere to hide it and carry it at all times. Derek told Gary that his unit commander wasn't quite as picky as some officers and he would be allowed to carry the 7" double-edged dagger. Gary told Derek if push came to shove to head for Sun Valley, they were better equipped than many infantry units.

They came ashore in Southern California and on the beaches of the southern states. Despite all the Navy and Air Force had done to reduce their numbers, they came in droves. The remaining members of the Palestinian bomber support personnel aided the UN forces.

Car bombs were the order of the day and the bombers didn't stick around to wait for the bombs to go off. They had an ample supply of timed detonators and had accumulated

lots of diesel and fertilizer. They used stolen cars, filled the trunks with the mixture, set the timers and drove to their destinations. The US was getting attacked from two directions, within and without. The US was at DEFCON 1, air transportation had ground to a halt except for military flights and the battles raged on the east and west coasts.

“Dang it,” Ron complained, “Those UN forces took out another American unit. What in the hell is going on?”

“I think that our forces are shifting from a conventional form of warfare to guerilla tactics partner,” Gary replied. “I’m worried about Derek though, who would have thought that Mexico would join with the Chinese and let China invade the US through Mexico?”

“Kevin called,” Ron announced, “He and John are doing their best to get here. Their biggest problem is all of the people fleeing Los Angeles. I don’t know why they had to wait until the last minute.”

“What about Paula?” Gary asked.

“She says that they are staying right where they are,” Ron replied, “I’m not so sure she isn’t right. Minnesota is a long way from any of the battles.”

“There sure has been a lot of traffic on I-40,” Clarence said, “It looks like a lot of people are fleeing to the heartland.”

“Most of those cars have California plates, I’ll bet,” Ron said, “Frankly I’d expected more people to try to move in on us.”

“With a sign that says ‘Insured by Smith & Wesson’ in 16” high letters?” Clarence asked. “Gary has quite the sense of humor.”

“Nothing funny about that sign,” Gary snapped, “And those are real bullet holes, too.”

“Personally I thought adding ‘Western Headquarters of the NRA’, was going a bit far,” Ron laughed.

“Why? I’m a patron member,” Gary protested.

Ron was half watching FOX News. “Oh crap,” he said. “The Ruskies bombed Chicago,” he replied.

“You’d better call Paula and tell her to get her hind end to Arizona,” Gary suggested.

After The Big One – Chapter 3 – The Kill

“I sure hope the power stays on,” Ron remarked, “I don’t want to get into the propane until we have to.”

“Did you get a hold of Paula?” Gary asked.

“Got her machine,” Ron replied, “Had a new message on it. The message was, ‘Sonja Henie & Glenn Miller, 1941’.”

“Huh?” Gary said.

“I thought you knew your movies better than that Gar-Bear,” Ron laughed.

“Oh, I get it,” Gary said, “The song I remember most was *It Happened in Sun Valley*.”

“Remember the name of the movie?” Ron asked.

“*Sun Valley Serenade*, wasn’t it?” Gary replied.

“You got it,” Ron said, “Anyway, I think that was her way of saying they were on their way.”

“Great,” Gary said, “They should be here in 2 days, max.”

“Unless they run into trouble,” Ron said.

“You told me not to worry about what you couldn’t control. Sauce for the Goose, Saavik-com,” Gary laughed.

“*Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan*, 1982,” Ron said.

“There you go,” Gary laughed.

Paula arrived 26 hours later. They had driven straight through. The only problem they had was finding gas. Not only was it hard to find, it was expensive. She told her dad that they had paid over \$3.00 a gallon in Kansas for gas on the turnpike. Except for the gas, they hadn’t had any problem getting to Sun Valley.

“Did you get my message dad?” Paula asked.

“That was damn clever Paula. It even took Gar-Bear a minute to figure it out,” Ron bubbled. “We have a trailer set up for you kids. Jennifer and Brenda are already in their trailers, and John and Kevin are on the way.”

“From where?” Paula asked.

“Los Angeles,” Ron explained, “They waited damn near to the moment the Chinese invaded before they bugged out.”

“I sure hope that they don’t have trouble finding gas like we did,” Paula offered.

“Yeah, honey,” Ron replied, “Me too.”

The #2 turret on the USS Iowa, BB-61 had been repaired before she put to sea, as mentioned. The battleships fared well in the battle on the high seas because the enemy had few aircraft carriers and they were the first targets of the Los Angeles class submarines.

Carriers and their aircraft were the greatest danger to battleships. Billy Mitchell had proven that in 1921 and 1923. The Japanese had reaffirmed the message on December 7, 1941. However, in the battle to block the invasion of the United States, there were no enemy aircraft to worry the battleships and those 16” shells sent more than one vessel to Davy Jones Locker.

The US fleets had retired and replenished their stores. They were too late to stop the invasion, but they attacked the invading forces from the rear, hampering the invasion greatly. The enemy had a firm foothold on American soil. They were extremely well equipped with the latest in surface-to-air anti-aircraft missiles and it was extremely difficult for the Air Force to maintain a steady onslaught. Radar seeking missiles couldn’t find the F-22s but the infrared missiles could.

The Chinese and Mexican Armies finally broke through along the border. It had become a logistic nightmare for the US Armored forces. They were having great luck against the T-99A1 tanks of the Chinese Army, but having expended their 40 rounds, the tanks had to withdraw and re-supply. Every time they did, the invaders gained a little ground. There were just so many of the invaders.

Derek had never seen anything like it in any of the exercises he’d participated in at Fort Irwin. Fort Irwin had been where Derek had met Mary on his second training tour there. She was driving the transport for his tank. Finally a Chinese HEAT round hit the right tread of his Abrams disabling it. They fought on until their cannon shells were expended. Then, they grabbed the two M-4’s in the tank and bugged out. They eventually worked their way back to the supply lines. The commander of his tank was also the Platoon Commander and he knew that Derek’s wife and kids were in northern Arizona.

“Sgt. Olsen, I’m about to give you a most unusual order,” the CO said. “Here, I had the Company Clerk put it in writing. I want you to take that Hummer over there with the Ma Deuce on it, load all the .50 cal you can find on it and bug out for your Dad’s place in northern Arizona. I wrote a frequency on the back of your orders. Monitor it 24/7. We’re losing big time here and will have to fall back soon. When you get the radio call, come running, we’ll need you to pick us up.”

“Sir, I can’t leave my unit in the middle of a battle,” Derek protested.

“You’re not Sgt.,” his CO insisted. “I’m dispatching other units too, some with Mk-19’s, some with Ma Deuces. We’re going to do a strategic, fighting withdrawal. I want you and the others pre-positioned to pull our chestnuts out of the fire when it goes to hell. You hook up with one of those Mk-19 units and head for Holbrook. Monitor that frequency 24/7. We won’t have a lot of time when we make the call. You got that soldier?”

“Yes Sir,” Derek said. Derek knew he was going to lose this argument. He also knew that the other men being assigned to bug out were married men with families. Reluctantly, he began to load can after can of .50BMG ammo into the back of the Hummer. A Mk-19 equipped Hummer pulled up alongside his vehicle as he loaded. The driver of the other vehicle was a Staff Sergeant from his unit.

“Are you about done loading Derek?” the SSgt asked.

“A few more cans, that’s all,” Derek replied.

“Shake a leg. We’ve got to get out of here,” the SSgt. told him. “Captain Bennett says you have family in northern Arizona and that I should go with you.”

I still have to fuel this beast up Mark,” Derek told SSgt Mark Wilson.

“Forget it,” Mark said, “I’m pulling a trailer with 300 gallons of JP-8.”

“Come on then. I’m done loading. Next stop is Sun Valley,” Derek said.

Derek hadn’t taken time to look at his orders. If he had, he would have seen that they were dated nearly a week earlier and signed not by his Captain, but by the Lt. Colonel in charge of his unit. This move had been carefully planned out as a last ditch effort to rescue as many of the Iowa Guardsmen as possible in the event they were over run.

He didn’t feel good about leaving his unit in the course of a battle, but orders were orders. When they stopped in Globe to refuel their Hummers, Mark took time to explain that the plan had come down from the General through the Lt. Colonel and to their Captain. Their mission was of critical importance if the remnants of the Iowa Guard were to survive. Somewhat reassured, Derek led them from Globe to Show Low where he picked up 77 for Holbrook. A while later, they pulled into the Sun Valley tract where his Dad lived.

“Derek! I didn’t expect to see you here. What is the hell is going on?” Gary asked.

“Let me say hi to Mary and I’ll come back and explain Dad. We’re getting our butts kicked,” Derek replied and took off to say hi to his family.

“Mr. Olsen? I’m Mark Wilson,” Mark said. “Let me explain a little bit. We’ve been kicking the hell out of them, but there are just too many of them. Derek’s tank lost a tread to a Chinese HEAT round and they had to bug out. The Commanding General had a contingency plan in case this happened. Derek and I are to hole up here and wait for a radio message to rescue any remnants of the Guard unit. I understand that you have a radio receiver?”

“I have an Icom R8500,” Gary answered.

“Can we get to your radio and set it to this frequency?” Mark asked holding a piece of paper.

“Come with me,” Gary said and led Mark to his shelter.

They set the radio to the assigned frequency and Gary asked one of David’s boys to monitor the radio. This was important, he told Jeremy, no fooling around. Mark and he returned to the basement.

“Mr. Olsen, this is quite the setup you have here,” Mark said. “You must have enough food for several years.”

“I started out with some beans and rice,” Gary explained. “Then, we added 2 years worth of food for one person from Walton Feed. We expanded that to 2 years for two people. Then, when I decided to invite the kids here, we purchased another 1-year supply for 15 people. I say that in a pinch we have enough food for 20 people for one year.”

“How many in your family?” Mark asked.

“Damon is four, Derek is five, Amy is four, Lorrie is seven plus there’s Sharon and myself,” Gary answered, “That’s 22 Mark.”

“So you’re short of a full year then?” Mark asked.

“Not really,” Gary replied. “I had some supplies before and we tend to keep two or three months worth of food on hand in addition to the emergency supplies.”

“How are you fixed for fuel, water and arms?” Mark asked.

Gary laughed. “I have 30,000-gallons of propane for my home plus 3,000-gallons for each of the four trailers. That’s 42,000-gallons of propane. The three of us have a shared diesel tank holding 4,000-gallons of stabilized diesel. We also each have a 7,500-gallon water tank. I have a 30kw propane powered generator and each of the trailers has a 12kw RV generator.

“Over the years, I’ve accumulated 2 Mini14s, 8 M1A rifles, a McMillan Tac-50 .50BMG, 4 AR-15’s, 2 Remington 870 riot guns, 2 .357 magnum revolvers, a Browning Hi-Power,

a.65 Browning Sauer War Souvenir from WW II, a .22 Saturday night special and a Ruger Mark II with integral suppressor. The .50 and one of the M1A's are also fitted with suppressors. Both rifles have Night Force variable power scopes. Oh, I almost forgot, I have a Winchester 9422 rifle, too."

"You go first class all the way, don't you Mr. Olsen?" Mark said.

"I try to. Mark, please call me Gary." Gary responded.

Derek returned and the three of them, Gary, Mark and Derek discussed the current situation. Gary advised Derek that they were maintaining a 24/7 watch on the assigned frequency.

Mark went on to explain some of the finer points of their mission. One thing they would need would be a driver for each vehicle. Derek and he would handle the Ma Deuce and the Mk-19, but obviously they couldn't do that and drive. Gary suggested Damon, but Derek took a pass. They decided that they'd better talk to Ron to see if either of his son-in-laws could drive. Brenda's husband was a good driver Ron said and if Kevin and John showed up anytime soon, Kevin could be the second driver. Otherwise, Jennifer's husband could drive.

Well now, speak of the Devil. About an hour after the men had the conversation, who should pull in but John and Kevin. They had left California in a hurry and without much money. They were ok until they started to run low on gas. To the west, gas was going for \$4.00 a gallon and up. Can anyone spell opportunistic? They only had enough money to get them to Flagstaff. They had the good fortune to run into someone from Palmdale that John knew who pulled in for gas at the station where they were parked, flat broke. He bought them enough gas to get to Sun Valley.

Ron told Kevin about the mission that Derek and Mark might have to perform. Was Kevin willing to drive, he wanted to know? Sure, Kevin said, as long as it didn't require a driver's license. They talked that one over with Derek and Mark; it did require a driver's license, but what the hell, Kevin was a good enough driver that they decided it was worth the risk.

It was very unlikely, they thought, that anyone would be taking time to check driver's licenses anyway. They made sure that everyone involved knew all of the risks. Ron armed Kevin and Brenda's husband with M1911 pistols and FAL rifles. Gary wasn't the only person who had been increasing his arsenal. Together, Clarence, Ron and Gary had 125 cases of .308 NATO ammo (100,000 rounds) and 75 cases of .223 ammo NATO (75,000 rounds). Their assortment of other ammo brought their total to well in excess of 200,000 rounds.

The three old geezers favored the .45 Colt auto for serious work or something of equal power like the .357 Magnum. Given a choice, Gary would have gone with the .45 acp too, but his neuropathic hands wouldn't permit him to operate the action. The call for ex-

traction came over the radio about 36 hours later. The troops were just north of Tucson in a little town named Catalina. They would continue to fall back along US 89; how long did Derek and Mark think it would take them to get there?

The best estimate was 4½ to 5 hours. Could they provide transportation for 50 or more came the request? Tell them yes, Ron urged, we'll find a way. That was the easy part; they borrowed (stole) two school buses from the Holbrook Public Schools and headed south. These were the big school buses that looked like small city busses and they were diesel engines.

They borrowed (stole) some diesel fuel and filled not only the busses but also their fuel tanks and the 300-gallon trailer. They took the full 5 hours to reach the Iowa Guard troops. They loaded the troops and bugged out. The Chinese and Mexicans weren't that close, having discontinued the chase at Catalina.

They passed through Show Low on the way back to Sun Valley and the Lt. Colonel told them to go to the ANG armory. They used their keys (M16A2's) to unlock the doors and emptied the Armory of weapons and MRE's. They also raided a medical clinic and got some much needed medical supplies so their Medics could attend to the wounded. He had been out of about everything. Now, he had all the supplies they would need for the foreseeable future.

They made one last stop, cleaning out a pharmacy of antibiotics, painkillers and whatever drugs the medic thought might come in handy. Ron made sure they picked up all of the insulin available; he doubted that Kevin had much with him.

They got back to Sun Valley and the troops slept where they fell. When they woke up the following morning, the women had prepared a huge breakfast for them: eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes and toast. From the amounts of food consumed, it was obvious that the Iowa Guardsmen hadn't eaten anything but MRE's in a while.

Sometime after the invasion, the telephone service had failed so Gary made his radio shack available to a communications specialist with the Guard. He managed to hook up with someone, Gary never found out whom, and the Colonel received orders that they were a guerilla unit until further orders. A quick trip to Holbrook and a few dollars later you wouldn't have known that the Iowa Guardsmen weren't farmers or ranchers. Several of them were farmers as a matter of fact.

Does anyone remember the old TV show, *The Rat Patrol*? Christopher George, et. al, Sahara Desert, WW II. The Iowa Guardsmen became the modern day equivalent of the Rat Patrol. They were hunting Chinese Rats and Mexican Rats and they were successful beyond their wildest dreams.

A grassroots movement took hold in the US, courtesy of President Bush's relaxation of the firearms laws. Rebels from the south, Yankees from the northeast, Farmers from the

Midwest and Ranchers from the west began to snip at the heels of the enemy. It wasn't anything that really drew attention and was reminiscent of the Revolutionary War.

Small groups of the enemy, typically patrols, began disappearing. The Chinese and Mexicans couldn't seem to get past the Sonoran Desert. In the southeast, the French were stopped cold in Georgia. The Germans attacked the northeast and did poorly in the rural areas but took the major cities with ease.

It wasn't that the people in the major cities were unwilling to fight; rather it was the lack of weapons with which to fight. Maryland fared poorly, too as compared to the rest of the country. As the reports filtered in, Bush felt vindicated in issuing his Executive Order and the Congressmen and women at the Greenbrier began to remember the lessons of the 18th century.

Spared the daily fighting in the heartland, the farmers worked from sunup to sunset growing their crops. Electrical power was spotty, at best. Enemy forces would move into an area and take down the power grid, sometimes cascading the outage and pulling down other grids.

However, no sooner had the enemy moved into an area and declared it secure than the patrols began to disappear. There was rarely any evidence of a fight. The patrols simply vanished. Many a field would grow a bumper crop due to the extra fertilizer enriching the crop. Enemy forces tried to attack refineries and oil fields in Oklahoma and Texas with aircraft. The US Air Force was alive and well and came out from hiding to meet the enemy. The bombing raids were abject failures.

In the southeast, the French learned to fear the rebel yell. It meant that somewhere some more of their force had disappeared. The enemy was unable to reinforce their troops because American submarines sank the empty troop ships when they sailed home for a second load of troops.

Flights carrying troops fell from the sky as an American Navy, constantly on the move, shot down the planes. In California the enemy soon learned that not all Californians were model, liberal, law-abiding citizens. Still recovering from the Littlerock 9.4 quake of July 26, 2004, the citizens of southern California were prepared for another disaster and if an invasion wasn't a disaster, what was?

The US military fought valiantly, but it was the citizen soldier who backstopped the Army and Marines. There were more illegal firearms, according to California law, in southern California than anyone imagined. In a state where any magazine holding more than 10 rounds was illegal, hundreds, and then thousands of battle and assault rifles sporting 20, 30 and 40 round magazines came out of closets and from under beds. These weapons weren't kept in the gun safes; that was too obvious. Sock and underwear drawers held the illegal pre-ban magazines. Ammo was still legal and stocks of ammo were plentiful.

The invasion and war hadn't brought down the news media. Papers were still published in cities that hadn't been taken over by enemy forces. FOX and CNN and MSNBC still broadcast the news. Little was said openly about the successes of the American militia. The ebb and flow of the military battles was reported fully, especially every enemy defeat.

Bush had moved from Cheyenne Mountain to an undisclosed location. With no diplomatic duties to perform, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell worked with Condie Rice and Dick Cheney advising the President on the waging of the war. Rumsfeld had more help than he ever imagined.

President Bush issued another Executive Order, this time authorizing the Director of Civilian Marksmanship to issue surplus weapons to any American who requested one, free of charge. Wasn't it a shame that McNamara and his whiz kids had destroyed all of those new and used M-14's back in the 1960's? New rifles, still in their boxes, which had cost the American taxpayer \$104 each were scraped and destroyed.

The Russians tried an end around; some call it a Hail Mary. They ignored the east coast and rounded Florida into the Gulf of Mexico. They attacked the coast from Alabama to Louisiana. The US military hadn't thought they would be so foolish and hadn't sent a large number of troops to the area. It turned out that they didn't need to.

The terrain slowed the Russians; they weren't used to so much moisture in the soil. The residents added to their burden and soon they, too, learned to fear the rebel yell. It was maddening. The Russians weren't met with forces they were accustomed to fighting. Rifle shots came from nowhere; soldiers disappeared; it was the battle of Stalingrad in reverse only much, much worse.

At least the Germans could see the Russians. The Germans were defeated by the Russian climate. The Russians were being defeated by a climate of a different kind; some called it the 2nd Amendment.

It had taken the forces of France, Germany, Spain and all the others from April 1, 2007 until May 27th, 2007 just to land troops on American soil. A month later, in late June while the three old geezers had entertained Derek in Sun Valley after the invasion on the east and west coasts, but before the invasion by the Chinese through Mexico, the invasion forces were stalled within the first 100 miles of US Territory.

Derek had made it back to Ft. Huachuca just days before the Chinese/Mexican invasion. Six weeks later, the Rat Patrol was striking out from Sun Valley. Ron, Gary and Clarence now had their own agenda.

"Look at this Gar-Bear," Ron said. "What do you see?"

"A 6" piece of 1½" water pipe with a cap on one end?" Gary asked.

“Well yes,” Ron laughed, “But it’s so much more. What happens when you add a little diesel fuel to some of that 46-0-0 fertilizer we have and add a blasting cap?”

“I believe that’s what they call and improvised explosive,” Gary kept a straight face. “But where do did you get blasting caps and fuse?”

“From under my workbench,” Ron laughed.

“You SOB,” Gary snarled, “When are we leaving? You did add some Tovex to set off the ANFO, didn’t you?”

“Oops. How long will it take you to get those fancy sniping rifles ready?” Ron asked.

“Just about as long as it will take for you to put together a bunch of those pipe bombs,” Gary replied quickly.

“You best hurry partner,” Ron said pulling a box of the bombs from under his workbench. “Won’t take me more than twenty minutes to fix the bombs and load this box in my pickup and grab my rifle.”

Gary couldn’t move that fast, but he had a 200 round case of the Hornady A-MAX .50BMG ammo sitting next to his Tac-50 in the front hall closet along with his scoped Super Match in its case read to go. He slipped into his web gear, grabbed the two rifles cases in one hand and the box of .50BMG in the other. He was pretty loaded down for an old man, but he got to Ron’s pickup in 5 minutes.

“Hi Clarence,” Gary said as he got into Ron’s pickup. “Where are we going?”

“You’re moving pretty good for a crippled old man today,” Clarence said.

“Who’s old?” Gary asked. “I asked, where are we going?”

“Well, Mark told me that the Rat Patrol is operating down around Globe today,” Ron said, “So I thought maybe we could head down that way and see if we could pick up some stragglers.”

“Is that all the more you have for a plan?” Gary asked, “Hell Ron, I didn’t even take time to kiss Sharon goodbye.”

“Dang Gar-Bear that rifle will shoot a mile or more,” Ron said.

“The rifle will shoot 2 miles Ronald,” Gary said, “But a thousand meters is a good shot for me. And, if it’s all the same to you, I’d prefer to use the M1A.”

“Oh. You want to get up close and personal, huh?” Ron teased his pal.

"I can do 800 yards with the 32 power scope, but 600 yards is more to my liking," Gary admitted."

"Are you going to kiss them before you shoot them Gary," Clarence laughed from the backseat of the quad cab.

"It all depends if the enemy is a boy or a girl," Gary replied.

"And you prefer boys, I suppose," Ron smiled.

"Naturally, I was born in Alameda," Gary went along.

"Mark told me that south of Globe there's a detachment of Chinese," Ron got serious. "He said they were going to be hitting them from the east when they stopped for rice and fish heads or whatever it is that they eat.

"I was studying that map he had. Made a copy of it on your copier. There's a dirt road going west from the place they figure to pull the attack. I figured we could come in from the west and set you up about a mile west on a little bluff the map showed. Clarence and I could move about 700 yards further east along the road and set up on a hill there. This fuse burns at the rate of 1 inch per six seconds. Figured I could lob a pipe bomb at them and you could pick them off when they pile out of their vehicles."

"What's Clarence going to be doing all this time?" Gary asked.

"Covering my back," Ron answered.

"Well, ok guys," Gary said, "But I think that's a pretty ambitious plan for three old farts like us."

"Just one thing Gar-Bear," Ron said. "Don't miss."

"Yeah, right," Gary said, "You want me to shoot a moving target at 600 to 700 yards and take them out with one shot. Do I have that right?"

"That about sums it up," Ron smiled.

"I just hope," Gary said, "That you're insurance is paid up and Linda will forgive me."

It took them a while to get to the Globe area and a while longer to find the road that Ron had marked on the copy of the map. Ron approached the area where the little bluff was. The dang thing was at least 200' high. Gary took his Super Match and climbed the bluff bitching the whole way.

When he finally completed the 200' haul up the bluff, he found a likely spot, brushed away a couple of rocks and uncased the Super Match. He used his little laser range-

finder to get the distance to where Ron and Clarence were perched on a 20' hill overlooking the road. 669 yards. He inserted a 20-round magazine in the Super Match, adjusted the scope for 700 yards and took his position. He was still panting a little from the climb. He tried to even out his breathing. He checked his watch. It was 11:55am.

He looked through the scope to the scrub brush he'd mentally marked at the bottom of the hill and zoomed the scope until he had a reasonable sight picture. His breath was coming evenly now. He heard automatic weapons fire in the distance to the east and sighted through the rifle. A vehicle was rapidly approaching from the east. He took one breath and let it out. He took a second breath and let it out. He was just taking in the third breath when the Chinese (he presumed) vehicle came near the hill.

The vehicle exploded and tipped on its side. He let half of the third breath out and aimed at the soldier climbing from the vehicle. He gently stroked the trigger. The Super Match round slammed against his shoulder. He took a deep breath and let it out as he began to regain his sight picture. He took a second breath and let it out. He pulled in the third breath just as another soldier began to emerge from the vehicle. He let out half the breath, confirmed his sight picture and stroked the trigger a second time. The Super Match slammed him again.

He continued the routine, taking in and letting out breaths. No more soldiers emerged from the vehicle. He left the rifle lay on its bipod, rolled to his side and set up. He pulled a cigarette from the pack in his shirt pocket, lit it and took a heavy draw. He noticed his hands were shaking. For the first time in his life, Gary Olsen had killed another human being. Make it two human beings.

He was still sitting there on his third cigarette when Ron and Clarence pulled up. Gary removed the magazine from the Super Match, cleared the action, folded the bipod and cased the rifle. His hands were still shaking when he climbed into the pickup 10 minutes later.

"Well fellas," Gary said evenly, "I think we've had enough fun for one day, let's go home."

Gary was silent the entire trip back to Sun Valley. He'd always thought he could kill another human being, given the proper circumstances, without guilt. Gary had a thing or two to learn about killing. He remembered the Pacific Black Tail deer he killed back in 1963. His hands had shaken that time too. Oh, he guessed, it was kill or be killed.

After The Big One – Chapter 4 – Explosives

Gar-Bear slowly came to terms with the killing. It wasn't any different than punching holes in paper targets from one viewpoint; but targets didn't bleed and didn't have families. What pulled him back to reality was Derek recounting fighting from a disabled Abrams and the harrowing bug out back to the supply lines. It angered him that someone would try to kill his son. Hmm, maybe those two Chinese guys he killed were men who had actually shot at Derek. It wasn't likely, but there was that possibility. Gary had conquered the Demon, guilt.

The ANFO explosive worked okay, but Ron didn't know that to get the most bang for his buck the length of the charge should be 6 times the diameter of the charge or greater. One of the Iowa Guardsmen explained it to him. ANFO was the most common explosive in use in the country the man said. A 94/6 ratio was pretty good but it wasn't all that fussy. Bigger charges were more efficient, too. Someone had mentioned an article that they'd read in a newspaper at one time.

Apparently no one knows how many caches of explosive materials there may be around Arizona such as that from which Tovex and more was stolen near Flagstaff.

And it appeared on Monday that investigators were leaning toward the possibility the theft was an inside job.

Meanwhile, authorities posted a reward of as much as \$10,000 and fanned out to Chino Valley, Paulden, Ash Fork and surrounding areas in circulating fliers in both English and Spanish.

Someone took 750 pounds of fuel-soaked ammonium nitrate, 250 pounds of Tovex, blasting caps and detonators from locked steel storage units along a dirt road near the flagstone quarry owned by Riverside, Calif.-based 3 Wins Mining Co. The quarry is near Drake, about 20 miles southwest of Flagstaff.

Coconino County Sheriff Joe Richards displayed photos on Monday that showed no obvious damage to the 4-by-5-foot steel-plated magazines, each of which has two locks inside deep cylinders in the doors.

Richards refused to comment on whether keys had opened the locks, but a spokesman for the company that supplied explosives to the 3 Wins quarry said the locks were cut. "This is quite unusual for someone to go in and tip over magazines and snip the locks and take everything that was in there," said Jay Anderson of Dyno Nobel Americas in Salt Lake City.

The sheriff said deputies found tracks of a vehicle believed to have been used in the theft. The tracks were about a mile from the magazines and went around a locked gate at the entrance to the quarry.

Richards said officers had received a number of tips that militia members living in the Paulden and Chino Valley areas could have been involved in the theft.

"We know the militia cells are there, but we have nothing substantive to suggest that they were involved in this," Richards said. "We certainly don't want to cause any panic by leading anyone to believe that organized militias have anything to do with it."

State mining officials say they don't know how much explosives are stored around the state by the 87 Arizona mines that use them. Neither does the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

"These are very common products that they're using for earth removal with rock," said Phil Howard, the state's assistant mine inspector. "In terms of mining, that's a small amount, but in terms of what it can do, that's a lot of damage.

"I don't think there's any other use for it than to use it as an explosive," he added. "It's got us all on pins and needles. We don't know if people know how to use this energy right, and that's very worrisome.

"Somebody knew it was out there."

State and federal laws require that users store explosives in padlocked metal magazines that are resistant to weather erosion, fire, bullets and theft. Mine operators are responsible for maintaining an inventory of their explosives. Permits to store them come from the state mine inspector.

ATF issues licenses to detonate the explosives but could not provide a list on Monday of mines that store explosives on site or the quantity they keep on hand.

Larry Bettendorf, an ATF spokesman, said dealers must meet stringent storage and transportation guidelines to get a federal license, but individual buyers do not have to meet those same restrictions. All that's required to buy explosives is a driver's license. "You go in, fill out the paperwork and that's pretty much it," he said.

Bettendorf said the quarry was not a licensed explosive user and was not subject to the storage and transportation restrictions required by the ATF.

Neither federal nor state law prohibits purchase of large quantities of household chemicals that can be turned into bombs, such as by recipes are available on the Internet.

"Those items are not controlled," said Dale Joelsting, the special agent in charge with the ATF in Phoenix. "It's like going in and buying a large quantity of laundry detergent. It's just a product."

Although explosives suppliers generally run background checks on customers who buy their explosives, no state agency is responsible for licensing blasters.

Howard said he and others pushed for upgraded requirements during the past legislative session but the bill "never even made it to committee."

Critics "tended to say we were just bureaucrats generating more work for ourselves," but with the recent theft, Howard said. "this may be the opportunity" to obtain tighter rules.

"Gar-Bear, we need to go shopping," Ron announced.

"Oh?" Gary asked, "What do we need?"

"Some decent explosives," Ron announced.

"I thought those little pipe bombs worked pretty good," Gary observed.

"They do," Ron acknowledge, "But I was talking to Ray down the road and he mentioned an article he read in a newspaper a few years back. Now that I know where the store is, it's time to go shopping."

"Huh?" Gary said. "Store? What store?"

"The mines and quarries around here," Ron explained. "They have all kinds of explosives and blasting caps and electrical detonators. We might get some Tovex or commercial ANFO too. Besides, I was talking to one of the Iowa Guardsmen. I made the pipe bombs the wrong dimensions."

"My friend Ronald, the Mad Bomber," Gary laughed.

They went into Holbrook and asked around. That wasn't all that easy to do; much of the population had made precautionary moves out of the area. The invaders weren't all that far away.

They found out where there were quarries and mining operations in the eastern Arizona area and bold as you please began hunting up the quarries and mines. Some of the places were deserted and had already been robbed of their explosives. Others simply had no apparent explosives locker.

They persisted and eventually struck gold. At a deserted quarry they found dynamite (Tovex), caps, detonators, wire, fuses and an old fashioned, plunger type firing device. They gingerly loaded the explosives in the back of Ron's pickup and headed back to Sun Valley.

Bob, the Iowa Guardsman, schooled the three old geezers in the proper handling of the purloined explosives. He also told them that they didn't really need to drag along the plunger thing, Ron's truck had a perfectly good battery.

Besides, there were plenty of ways to set off those electrical caps that didn't involve dragging around the awkward plunger. They could use cooking timers to make improvised explosives timers, too. By the time Bob was done schooling them they at least knew enough about explosives that they could avoid blowing themselves to kingdom come. This was horse of a different color; they could go after those SOBs in southern Arizona and make a statement.

The Rat Patrol had a few close calls, running into opposition that exceeded their initial estimates on an occasion or two, but they'd managed to avoid harm. Other Guardsmen were out conducting ambushes and all sorts of proper guerilla activities. The greater their successes, the more difficult it became. The Chinese and Mexicans were becoming positively paranoid, refusing to travel in small units without heavy-duty backup in the form of truck mounted heavy machine guns and the like.

It was the same all around America. Patriots and homegrown militia units were coming out of the woodwork. The corner had been turned. The invading forces began to run low on essential supplies like ammunition for their rifles and machine guns.

The hit and run tactics of the Americans tended to break down fire discipline and the invading force was shooting at ghosts. Unable to successfully re-supply in adequate quantities, the 'Police Action' was beginning to fail. Napoleon had said that an army travels on its stomach. He was referring to the inability of the French Invaders to get food when they invaded Russia. These modern invaders could get food for their bellies, but getting food for the appetites of their rifles and machine guns and mortars and tanks was another matter.

Surprisingly, no major country was willing to turn to the nuclear option and they made sure that those among them that would resort to any means didn't have access to weapons of mass destruction.

Back in the Middle East, the Arabs had the advantage because they knew the turf. But, they were thousands of miles from home on the other's guy's turf. And this other guy could teach them a thing or two about being nasty.

Americans, for all their shortcomings, watched a lot of movies and in real life were able to make those improbable or impossible movie stunts work. In real life, one didn't do it like they did in the movies, but the results were the same. The only difference, many Americans realized, was that they actually had to stop and reload their firearms. They simply couldn't find any 30 shot revolvers.

And, those bad guys? Some of them were pretty good shots and could not only hit the broadside of a barn, they could hit you if you exposed yourself.

There was a whole generation of veterans from Vietnam. They knew about booby traps

and punji sticks and trip wires. The French did, too; and the Americans made them remember their failed war in Southeast Asia.

Not all of the American armed forces had been turned into guerilla units, but they chose their battles now, favoring ambushes over head-on confrontations. American factories were still turning out CBU's and ammunition and replacement vehicles. The tide was definitely turning. More and more US fighter-bombers were taking the UN forces to task. More and more the UN simply wanted to pack up and go home. But they couldn't even do that. Their ships lay on the bottoms of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Ninety percent of their flights to the US were being shot down.

Gary, Ron and Clarence were putting those explosives to good use. If the ragheads could bomb American convoys in Iraq, why couldn't they bomb Mexican and Chinese convoys in southern Arizona?

The proper amount of correctly placed explosives, they found could even take out a Chinese T-99 tank. The three old geezers were just that, old and not in the best of health. They weren't strong young men who could bench press 300 pounds either. But what they lacked in strength and mobility, they made up for with years of cunning and guile and surviving within a system that they thought, at times, was out to get them. They had survived the big one and they would, God willing, survive this one.

Ronald was proposing an extended 3-day venture to southern Arizona. Derek and Bob and Mark could go with them. They'd take 2 pickups, plenty of explosives and, of course, Gary's sniper rifles. Ron wanted to go down to the Tucson area. Radio reports indicated that the Patriots and militia groups in Tucson were having their problems. Apparently the Chinese and Mexican armies had decided that they needed to clean out Tucson and get on with their invasion.

The standard arm for the Iowa Guardsmen, being an armored unit, was the Pistol, M9, semi-automatic, 9mm. Each Abrams carried 2 M-4 carbines. Support personnel were also issued the M-4 carbines. The break-in at the ANG Armory in Show Low had produced a few M16A2 rifles. Consequently, all of the Guardsmen had a M16 variant and a pistol. They practiced double tapping with the pistols, that 9mm round was miserable.

Gary had brought out some of the M1A rifles and Bob, Mark and Derek were proficient in their use. Derek, as a matter of fact, had become very proficient with the Tac-50 rifle. One of the Guardsmen was an armorer and a pretty good one at that. He had taken three of the 26" barreled 870's into the now abandoned Nichols Gun Store in Holbrook and used the equipment to shorten the barrels and magazines of the shotguns to 12".

Nichols had pistol grips in his store so he hadn't needed to fashion pistol grips. Gary had several boxes of the low recoil, 2³/₄", 9-pellet tactical buckshot, too. The 12-pellet was just too much of a hand full in the puny little shotgun.

The men slung the shotguns over their shoulders with a makeshift sling. It wasn't fancy,

but it worked. On this trip, Ron and Clarence would be armed with their suppressed FAL rifles, their M1911's and their puny little shotguns. Gary opted for his scoped and suppressed Super Match M1A rifle, his Ruger .357 Magnum and his puny little shotgun.

Derek had the Tac-50 and Bob had an M-4. Mark went with one of Gary's extra M1A's. Bob would handle the explosives and Derek would do the long range sniping with the suppressed Tac-50. They planned to circle Tucson and come in through the Old Tucson Studio on the northwest side of town.

They used country roads, such that they were, and avoided the main roads. It took a lot longer to get to Tucson on the poor roads, but they avoided notice. They kept their speed down, too, so that they produced a small dust cloud as they traveled the unimproved roads. Above all, they wanted to avoid any direct confrontation with the enemy, except on their terms. Old Tucson Studio can be accessed from the northwest via McKinney Road. Just to the northwest of the Studio, McKinney intersects with west Gates Pass Road. The latter goes all the way into downtown Tucson. The Studio had burned in 1995 and was rebuilt in part and reopened in 1997.

It was late afternoon when the six men arrived at the junction of Kinney and Gates Pass Road. They looked around and decided to move a little east on Gates Pass. They found a place to hide the pickups and went to ground in an area where the road cut through the mountains.

"What do you think, Dad?" Derek asked.

"I think I'm tired," Gary replied. "What did you really want to know?"

"You told me that you'd been here before," Derek said, "What do you remember of the area?"

"Doggone it, that was years ago when I still had a memory," Gary laughed. "The Old Tucson Studio burned down since we were here. It's been rebuilt, but isn't the same. This road winds around a lot and changes its name a couple of times. If you go far enough to the east you hit I-10. Sharon and I stayed in a motel south on I-10 a ways. Downtown is on the other side of I-10. We never got over there. Anyway, if they're patrolling this road, there is one hell of a good choke point up the road a ways. Bob could plant some explosives in that area, for sure."

"Ok, that is what I wanted to know Dad," Derek replied, "Please continue."

"You could probably get on top of the pass and have a pretty good shot at anyone in the area west of I-10," Gary said, "I'm not sure about the distances, though."

"Do you remember anything else?" Derek asked.

"Seems to me there was a college and on the west side of the college, a park," Gary

strained. "That's about all I can remember."

"All right," Derek said. "Mark, Bob and I are going to move down the road to the pass and check out the area. Why don't you three old men get some rest?"

"Who's old?" Gary snapped. "You must mean Ron and Clarence. Now they're old."

Derek, Mark and Bob set off on foot to reconnoiter the area. They soon learned that the road was patrolled when an old WW II surplus Jeep carrying 4 Mexican soldiers passed. Derek hoped his Dad and the others had the good sense to keep their heads down. He also hoped that they had done a good enough job hiding those pickups. He made a note of the time the Jeep passed and they moved on.

When they got to the pass area, Derek saw what Gary had meant about a choke point. The road curved and curved again and again. They climbed to the top of the pass. From that vantage point they could see a lot of the Tucson area. There was the college and the park Gary had mentioned. There wasn't much traffic except in downtown and on the I-10. And, it was quite a hike to I-10 through probably hostile territory. They climbed back down to the road and returned to the old geezers.

"Well?" Gary asked.

"Well," Derek said, "You were right about the choke point, but we only saw one Jeep pass the entire time we were out."

"They came by here and turned south on Kinney," Gary reported.

"They didn't see you did they?" Mark asked.

"Oh hell no," Ron laughed. "Had them in our sights the whole time though. Could have taken the whole bunch out."

"I'm sure glad you didn't Ron." Derek said, "That would have brought the whole bunch down on us."

"We weren't born yesterday Derek," Ron replied, more serious.

"Whatever. I think that we're going to have to try and drop a bridge on I-10," Derek suggested, "Bob, can we handle that?"

"Dropping a bridge or two is the easy part," Bob said, "We have plenty of explosives. The problem is in getting to the bridge. It looked to be maybe 4 miles to the freeway."

"Can you use a radio controlled remote detonator?" Clarence asked.

"No. The distance is too far from the pass," Bob replied. "I think that we'd better use a

timer and just hope that there is plenty of traffic on the freeway when the Tovex goes off.”

“It sounds to me like we need to spend a day or so mapping traffic patterns,” Mark offered.

“Why don’t you three kids rest up for a while and after dark get back on top of that pass?” Ron suggested.

Accustomed to eating MRE’s the Guardsmen had sorted through the boxes and picked meals they liked. Gary had eaten his share of MRE’s too and he had also picked some meals Derek had recommended.

Ron and Clarence had just grabbed a handful of the meals and shoved them in their packs. They got out a small stove and heated water for coffee. The MRE’s only had a single packet of coffee and Gary had made sure to bring a jar of Folgers’s instant. They made their coffee and started in on the MRE’s.

“Ewww,” Ron complained, “This crap isn’t fit for a dog.”

“What did you pick?” Derek asked.

“Pick?” Ron replied, “Hell I don’t know, I just grabbed a half dozen and stuffed them in my pack.”

The three Guardsmen began to laugh.

“Some of the meals are pretty good, Ron,” Derek explained. “And some are just plain awful. We usually pick the ones we like.”

“That’s why,” Bob remarked, “Some people call MRE’s Meals Refused by Ethiopians.”

After dinner, they had coffee and had smokes and the Iowa Guardsmen returned to the pass. They spent the next 24 hours on the pass. A Jeep patrol made a loop down the road once every 4 hours. It was always the same, 4 Mexican soldiers. The traffic late at night on the I-10 was light, but by 8am, plenty of enemy military vehicles were moving on the freeway.

The three of them noticed that there wasn’t any foot traffic and only a rare vehicle in the area between the pass and I-10. They decided to make the trip to the freeway the next night. It appeared that they could take a pickup to within a mile of the freeway without being noticed. They climbed down to the road and returned to the men.

“I found one I like,” Ron said.

“One what?” Mark asked.

“MRE,” Ron laughed. “I’m sure glad I don’t have to live on these.”

The three younger men turned in and did their best to get some shuteye. It was pretty hard sleeping in the heat. Tucson was still plenty hot in September. Towards evening the young men got up ate a meal and put two cases of Tovex in the back of the empty pickup. They bade the old farts goodbye and shortly after dark, when the patrol had passed, set out for the park next to the college.

Ron, Gary and Clarence took the TAC-50 and the Super Match and Clarence’s suppressed FAL and walked to the pass and climbed to the top. Gary added the Magnum Universal Night Sight (MUNS) and they settled down to keep an eye on the Guardsmen. Around 3:30am they saw the pickup pull out of the park and head towards the freeway. The three men got out of the pickup and hauled the two boxes of Tovex to an overpass. The old men couldn’t see what happened after the young guys got to the freeway.

Derek, Bob and Mark moved cautiously from where they parked the pickup to the freeway overpass. Bob divided the Tovex into six piles and bound them with duct tape. He carefully inserted an electrical detonator into each bundle. They placed three bundles of Tovex under the northbound bridge and three under the southbound bridge. They connected the detonators with some of the blasting wire the old men had borrowed from the quarry and attached one lead to the battery and one to the timer. The other battery lead went to the timer. Their only problem they had was that the timer could only be set for a maximum of one hour. Mark and Derek returned to the pickup and Bob stayed behind to crank up the timer to a full hour at 7am.

The three old men saw two of the men moving back to the pickup. Where was the third man? Just after 7am they saw the third man, Bob they presumed, take off for the pickup. It took Bob almost 30 minutes to get back to the pickup. The pickup immediately departed and got through the pass barely 15 minutes before the Jeep patrol came by.

At 8am the I-10 was loaded with traffic, especially the northbound lane. It appeared that the invading armies were preparing to move northward to Phoenix. From 4 miles away, the explosion wasn’t all that loud. The south ends of both the northbound and southbound lanes of the I-10 exploded upward and the bridges dropped. Two trucks, apparently carrying munitions, couldn’t stop in time on the northbound side and fell into the abyss. The secondary explosion was bigger than the primary explosion that had dropped the spans.

The Jeep patrol heard the explosion and did a quick u-turn. The Mexican soldiers never knew what hit them as Gary, Ron and Clarence shot them in their backs. The three old men climbed down the pass and hurried as fast as their tired old legs would carry them back to the Guardsmen. It was time they felt, to get the hell out of Dodge.

They were well up Kinney road when a helicopter passed overhead. They slammed to a stop and Derek piled out with the Tac-50. The helicopter lined up for a strafing run and

Derek let loose with the Tac-50. He had switched to a magazine filled with APIT, taken from a belt for the M-2. Several of his shots hit the helicopter, and finally one hit something vital and the helicopter exploded in mid-air. They didn't stick around to see what happened next, they bugged out for home.

The men made it back to Sun Valley without a problem. Ron and Gary were watching the news when the announcer began reporting an interesting story. The US Army had announced that an expected attack of Phoenix had failed to materialize. The army had it on good authority, that probably meant that they had a spy in the enemy camp, that a large force of Chinese and Mexican troops was suppose to attack Phoenix that day.

A portion of the enemy force had made it part of the way to Phoenix, but an explosion caused an overpass on the I-10 in Tucson to collapse trapping most of the enemy force on the south side of the collapsed overpass. Lead elements of the enemy force, apparently unaware that their force had been cut off, were observed by the army in the area of the junction of I-8 and I-10. US Air Force fighter-bombers had been scrambled from Luke AFB and had caught the force just north of the junction. The army was estimating that over 200 enemy vehicles had been destroyed. An expeditionary force was in route from Phoenix to mop up after the air assault. FOX News would have further details in a later report.

"We'll I'll be danged," Ron said, "We interfered with a major advance of the enemy."

"We did, didn't we," Gary smiled. "I just hope that no one finds out it was us that dropped that overpass."

"What? Why not?" Ron challenged, "We're heroes."

"We may be heroes, my friend," Gary responded, "Or maybe we just got lucky. Either way, I'd prefer that we were anonymous heroes."

"But why?" Ron asked. "If the army knew what we'd done, maybe they would give us more supplies and weapons."

"The Rat Patrol has been doing pretty good," Gary summarized. "Apparently no one knows where the unit is based. We've done pretty well too, picking off their leavings and with our own forays. If anyone finds out where either of us is based, and especially if they find out we're both operating out of this housing tract here in Sun Valley, they could turn the tables on us and do to us what we've been doing to them. I'd rather keep it the way it is."

"I see what you mean, I guess," Ron said, "But I think you're wrong."

"Maybe, or maybe not," Gary continued, "But we see stories every night on the news where information the army doesn't want out somehow makes it on the news. The media has changed, I'll grant you, but they're still a bunch of buttholes trying to make a

name and they don't care who they step on to do it."

It was apparent that the two men were at opposite ends on this issue so they dropped it. Gary did have a point. They, like so many other faceless militia groups around the country, especially in the southeast, were forcing the UN forces to expend precious resources they could ill afford to expend.

It was American Patriots and the unnamed militia units who were defeating the UN as surely as it was the military. The other countries apparently just didn't get it. The Germans should have, they had opposed the Americans as hired lackeys in the Revolutionary war. The countries that did get it had declared themselves as neutral and hadn't joined in this UN action. Bush had been wrong to pull out of the Middle East. It made the US appear to be weak.

"I'll tell you one thing Ronald," Gary said. "We need to step up our campaign against those blasted UN forces. We have them run ragged. If we need more weapons, we can 'borrow' them if we can find them. What we ought to do is to go back to Tucson and try and cut those SOBs off from the south, trapping them in Tucson. We could turn the city into our own private target range with live, moving targets."

"How the hell would we do that?" Ron asked.

"You don't think that there are overpasses and bridges south of Tucson?" Gary smiled impishly. "We just need to get some more old used pickups that won't stand out and move the entire Iowa Guard down to Tucson to work with us. We could blow some of the bridges on I-10 east and I-19 south. That would trap most of that bunch in Tucson. I think those Guardsmen would be only too happy to get in there and maul the Chinese and the Méxicans."

"Well, I don't suppose it would hurt to ask," Ron responded, "Bring it up to them."

After The Big One – Chapter 5 – Snipe Hunt

British soldiers who had served in India coined the term sniper. A popular sport was hunting Snipes, a long billed bird of Eurasia and America. Difficult to hit, marksmen who were good hunters, usually shooting from hidden positions and at a considerable distance, were called snipers. Now you know.

The first military snipers were the Americans in the Revolutionary War. Their rifled, Kentucky rifles were capable of propelling a musket ball accurately for some 300 yards. They usually fired from concealed positions. Over the course of history, snipers were activated during war, as in the American Civil War, the First World War and the Second World War. In every case, the Americans had to start over. There was some sort of stigma attached to killing an enemy from concealment. The lesson of snipers was not lost on the Germans or Japanese and they began WW II with a sniper corps. The Germans used the Mauser 98 equipped with a telescopic sight in both wars. The Americans restored their snipers, using first 1903A4 Springfield equipped with M84 telescopes.

Eventually they switched to the Garand model's 1C mounting either M81 or M82 scopes. In order to assure meeting production requirements, the M1E8 was adopted in September 1944 as US Rifle, Caliber .30, M1D (Sniper's), but except for a few prototype specimens the M1D was not produced during WWII, and would not properly be considered as a WWII infantry weapon. Relatively large numbers of standard M1 rifles were converted into M1D configuration during the early 1950's, but it was the M1C that was the principal sniping weapon for the American army in Korea.

The Marines used the M1903A1/Unertl as its primary sniper rifle, partly because the M1C was in short supply during early action. Early in the war the USMC had seen the need for employment of snipers. Indeed the Marines had revived their program of sniper/scout training in 1960. Meanwhile the army had let its sniper-training program fade away to nothing at about the same time. In mid 1965 the USMC initiated the first steps towards fielding properly qualified snipers in Vietnam.

The first sniper units that arrived in country during the mid 1960s came with the target-grade Winchester model 70 rifle, this was the same rifle that the 3rd Marine Division had used with great success in the various rifle tournaments it had competed in. The ammo was also of match/target grade, and was a 30-06 round, with a 173-grain boat-tailed bullet. The telescopic sight was the Unertl 8x magnification scope which was about 2ft long. Although this set up worked well in competition shooting, in Vietnam it didn't fare so well. The main problem being the weight - it was too heavy! The Unertl scope was also a bit finicky, requiring a fine adjustment of the sight to the target, and worse - requiring sighting-in shots!

As a replacement for the model 70 the Marines adopted the Remington model 700 (M-40 sniper rifle) in 7.62mm/.308 NATO caliber. Used in conjunction with a Redford 3-9x variable magnification telescopic sight the Marines now had a proper sniping rifle in their inventory. The Remington model 700 was a light, dependable, rugged, and easy to

handle rifle. It was also very accurate and was more than capable of hitting an enemy soldier at ranges of 600 yards - and if need be in excess of 1000 yards.

Rock Island Arsenal converted 1,435 M-14 National Match rifles to the Super Match (M-21) configuration between October 1969 and March 1970. Of this number 1,200 were shipped to Vietnam in March 1970.

With probably more than 300 kills during the Vietnam War, Carlos Hathcock is the most famous sniper in United States History. The North Vietnamese put a \$30,000 bounty on his head and called him "Long Trang" or White Feather.

Hathcock was once accredited with hitting a NVA at 2,500 yards with a special scope-adapted .50 caliber machine gun in single shot operation. The year before going to Vietnam, Carlos won top honors at the National Rifle matches at Camp Perry Ohio.

Hathcock began honing his rifle skills at an early age bringing home food for the family table in rural Arkansas. When an armored vehicle he was riding in hit a mine and caught fire in Vietnam, he was sent back to the US to recover from extensive burns. Although he was unable to return to Vietnam, he put his efforts into establishing the Scout/Sniper School at Quantico Virginia.

Here, Hathcock spoke against the "John Wayne" mentality of many soldiers, always-emphasizing skill and quiet deliberate thought as essential to be an effective sniper. Sadly, the slow debilitating disease of multiple sclerosis finally did what the North Vietnamese couldn't do; he died at the age of 57.

Gary owned, arguably, one of the finest sniping rifles in the world, the McMillan Tac-50. The Barrett M82A1, which had started it all, was not without its critics, the State of California being the most notable. The President of Barrett had waged a campaign against the state and local government. His first letter was:

*December 11, 2002
Via Facsimile (213) 847-0676 and
U.S. Mail
Chief William J. Bratton
Los Angeles Police Department
150 North Los Angeles Street
Los Angeles, California 90012*

*Re: LAPD 82A1 Rifle, Serial No. 1186
Point of Contact: Jim xxxxx213-xxx-xxxx*

Dear Chief Bratton,

I, a U.S. citizen, own Barrett Firearms Mfg. Inc., and for 20 years, I have built .50 caliber rifles for my fellow citizens, for their Law Enforcement departments and for their nation's

armed forces.

You may be aware of the latest negative misinformation campaign from a Washington based anti-gun group, the Violence Policy Center. The VPC has, for three or so years, been unsuccessful in Washington, D.C. trying to demonize and ban a new subclass of firearms, the .50 caliber and other "too powerful" rifles. This type of nibbling process has been historically successful in civilian disarmament of other nations governed by totalitarian and other regimes less tolerant of individual rights than the United States.

The VPC's most recent efforts directs this misinformation campaign at your state, attempting to get any California body to pass any law against .50 caliber firearms. In March 2002, the VPC caused the California State Assembly, Public Safety Committee to consider and reject the issue by a 5 to 0 with 1 abstaining vote.

Regrettably, the same material has been presented to your city council. I personally attended the council meeting in Los Angeles regarding attempts to ban ownership of the .50 caliber rifle in your city. I was allowed to briefly address the council. The tone of the discussion was mostly emotionally based, so the facts that I attempted to provide were ineffective to the extent they were heard at all. The council voted to have the city attorney draft an ordinance to ban the .50, and further, to instruct the city's representatives in Sacramento and in Washington, D.C. to push for bans at their respective levels.

At that council meeting, I was very surprised to see an LAPD officer seated front and center with a Barrett 82A1 .50 cal. Rifle. It was the centerpiece of the discussion. As you know, there have been no crimes committed with these rifles, and most importantly, current California law does not allow the sale of the M82A1 in the state because of its detachable magazine and features that make it an "assault weapon." This rifle was being deceptively used by your department. The officer portrayed it as a sample of a currently available .50 cal rifle, available for sale to the civilians of Los Angeles. One councilman even questioned how this rifle was available under current laws, but as I stated, facts were ineffective that day.

Your officer, speaking for the LAPD, endorsed the banning of this rifle and its ammunition. Then he used the rifle for photo ops with the Councilmen, each of whom, in handling the firearm, may have been committing a felony. I was amazed.

Since 1968, with the closing of the U.S. Springfield Armory, all of the small arms produced for the various government agencies are from the private sector. Every handgun, rifle or shotgun that law enforcement needs comes from this firearms industry. Unless the City of Los Angeles has plans of setting up its own firearms manufacturing, it may need to guard the manufacturing sources it has now.

When I returned to my office from Los Angeles, I found an example of our need for mutual cooperation. Your department had sent one of your 82A1 rifles in to us for service. All of my knowledge in the use of my rifle in the field of law enforcement had been turned upside down by witnessing how your department used yours. Not to protect and

serve, but for deception, photo opportunities, and to further an ill-conceived effort that may result in the use of LA taxpayer monies to wage losing political battles in Washington against civil liberties regarding gun ownership.

Please excuse my slow response on the repair service of the rifle. I am battling to what service I am repairing the rifle for. I will not sell, nor service, my rifles to those seeking to infringe upon the Constitution and the crystal clear rights it affords individual to own firearms.

I implore you to investigate the facts of the .50, to consider the liberties of the law-abiding people and our mutual coexistence, and to change your department's position on this issue.

Sincerely,

*BARRETT FIREARMS MANUFACTURING, INC.
Ronnie G. Barrett
President*

Later, he wrote to a Senator:

*June 30, 2003
Chairman, Public Safety Committee
State of California
Sen. Bruce McPherson
Via: Fax (916) 445-4688*

Dear Senator McPherson,

United States defense contractors such as Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc., Murfreesboro, TN USA rely on orders from the US Military as a primary source of income but this government income for most contractors is only part of the necessary income for long term survival. Commercial or civilian product sales are also a main source of income that makes payroll and for good working conditions for their employees. We must support these defense contractors in both peace and war and allow them to operate, market and sell their products under the rules, regulations and law of the Federal Government. There is a balance of customers among defense contractors that is necessary for sound, long term business and by eliminating commercial sales in California this balance is disrupted. To vote against .50 cal rifles puts jobs of your constituents at risk, the lives of your police at risk, and in the end the safety of the State of California at risk. Are you willing to jeopardize this?

The defense industrial base in America is at risk of being unable to fully support our country in time of need without adequate opportunity for commercial sales of various products. In the Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc situation the civilian legal Barrett .50 cal rifle is at risk in the state of California. The attempt to ban a legal firearm not only

violates the basic principals of the US Constitution but sets a precedence that endangers many vital defense contractors. In the Barrett case it also endangers California law enforcement agencies from having a proven and important tool in the fight against terrorism. H. Hayes Parks, Special Assistant to the Judge Advocate of the US Army wrote:*

“The M82A1 Barrett... are manifestations of the important historic cooperation played by private citizens and small business in the United States in the development of weapons and munitions necessary for the US Armed Forces to perform their mission to protect the national security interests of the United States by fighting and winning, with as few friendly casualties as possible.” This statement sums up the vital role both government and commercial business play in the sound business practices of various defense contractors of which Barrett is one.

*Page 2
Chairman, Public Safety Committee
June 30, 2003*

The Barrett .50 cal rifle was ascertained by the troops on the front lines in Iraq as the best performing small arm and they have the private defense contractor to thank for that weapon. Ban .50 cal rifles in California and you take this tool from your police also. The war on terror is not over! The Barrett .50 cal rifle has been in the hands of competitive shooters, hunters, and collectors for over 20 years and is a mainstay of the long range competitive shooters matches. It also serves on Police SWAT teams as the primary long range anti-sniper weapon.

It is the Barrett position that we choose not to support in anyway state or local governments who are against the US Constitution and the safety and security of this nation. If California were to ban the sale of the Barrett .50 cal rifle we will stop the sale and service of all Barrett products to all State Law Enforcement agencies of the state of California immediately and ask all small arms manufactures to consider similar action. Re-classify the .50 cal rifle and you align yourself and the State of California as being part of the very terrorists who are attempting to destroy this great nation of ours. Please vote against banning or re-classifying .50 cal rifles.

Respectively,

*Ronnie G. Barrett
President
Barrett Firearms Mfg., Inc.
Murfreesboro, TN USA*

**Quoted from: Memorandum for Staff Judge Advocate, US Army Special Forces Command, (Airborne), Fort Bragg, NC Sept 7, 1999*

Gary hated the bureaucrats in California who had tried to deny him his rights; that was

what led him to leave California after the big one. They were as bad as these UN SOB's who had invaded the US. He sort of hoped the Chinese army had taken care of the LA Police Chief. Now it was his turn, he and his friends and those good 'ole boys from Iowa were going to take care of some Chinese and Mexican soldiers.

Not only did he own one of the finest .50 BMG sniping rifles, his Super Match was the equivalent of the M-21. Specifically, the sole difference between the M-21 and Super Match built by Springfield Armory, Inc. was the stock.

Bob had to go to Holbrook to find wind up alarm clocks. It seemed that everyone had an electric these days. He bought all 11 that the store had; you never knew when a good alarm clock might come in handy. He wrapped the Tovex sticks into compact bundles of 7 sticks each, something he should have done the last time. He was set to go.

Several of the Guardsmen wanted to use one of Gary's M1A rifles in preference to the M-4's or M16A2's. Gary handed out the 7 standard M1A's and set out two cartons of 20-round magazines. The Guardsmen would have to settle for putting two of the M-14 magazines in each of their mag pouches, he was out of the Tag MOLLE pouches that held 4 M-14 mags. Each Guardsman took a 200-round battle pack of 7.62x51mm ammo to hone his skills and re-sight his weapon.

It took the men most of the week to locate abandoned pickups and make them road worthy. They were finally ready to go. Ron and Clarence were more careful about which MRE's made it into their pickup this time. They got to them first and had 3 cases of meals they liked before the grunts even thought about picking out theirs.

They had no idea how long this adventure would last, so they took extra ammo for their rifles, handguns and shotguns. Derek loaded 2 Tac-50 magazines with APIT and the other 8 with the Hornady his Dad had bought. He took along an M-4, just in case. There were 15 of them plus the Iowa Guardsmen.

They piled into the pickups and Hummers and set off for Tucson. They couldn't enter Tucson the same way; their exit hadn't exactly gone unnoticed. This time they picked up US 70 at Globe and took it to Safford where it became US 191. They hit I-10 east of Tucson and drove through 'hostile' country to get to Tucson.

They risked all and drove into Tucson as far as exit 267. Bob set his charges under the overpasses and set the clocks for 12 hours. They cut across on Valencia Road and set charges on the I-19 overpasses at the 95 exit. Bob adjusted the clocks so the overpasses on both freeways would go up at the same time. They had about 10 hours to wait for the charges to go off, so they lost themselves in a residential neighborhood and hunkered down to wait for the explosions.

They had seen many enemy vehicles and sincerely hoped that none of the occupants of those vehicles had seen them. They were far enough from downtown Tucson, they hoped, that they would be okay. Some of the homes they noticed had bullet holes in

them. They started to go from house to house looking for any residents of the neighborhood. They found a few bodies, usually men, and the houses looked as if they had been deserted in haste, almost as if the residents had been yanked from their homes.

“Are you ready for this?” Ron asked as he chowed down on a MRE.

“What do you mean ready?” Gary countered. “How can you get ready for something like this? We aren’t a bunch of snotty nosed kids itching to get into their first battle. We’re mature gentlemen out on a little hunting expedition.”

“Gary, we be three tired old men just trying to save our butts,” Clarence countered.

“I’m looking forward to the meal,” Ron said, “Shall we start with Chinese or go for Mexican?”

“How about we go for staying alive?” Gary suggested. “I may be old and I may be tired, but if it’s all the same to you, I prefer that my heart quit beating on its own accord.”

“Is he always like this?” Clarence asked Ron.

“Only when he’s scared,” Ron said, “That’s ok, I’m scared, too. When you get to be our age, you’re supposed to be retired or at least a General behind the front lines. Hell Clarence, we are the front line.”

“Well, with the scopes and suppressors,” Clarence countered, “We can stay back some and snipe.”

“I don’t even know why we’re dragging around these sawed off shotguns,” Gary added, “I have no intention of getting close enough to the enemy to use mine.”

They heard the first of the explosions in the distance. A moment later the second explosion, much nearer, went off. Derek joined the men.

“We’ll wait until dark,” Derek said, “And get out and start taking them out.”

“It’s a shame we don’t have more suppressors,” Gary said.

“I took the liberty of borrowing your suppressed Mark II’s,” Derek said. “Our armorer spent some time at Nichols and came up with some suppressors for our M16’s and M-4’s. We have to clean them and change the baffle plates periodically, but they’ll do.”

“You’re not supposed to take things without asking Derek,” Gary said. “Did you find the standard velocity match ammo for the Ruger’s?”

“I brought both bricks,” Derek replied, “Did you have more?”

“We each had 2 bricks Derek, but I suppose a thousand rounds ought to be enough,” Gary laughed.

Ron and Clarence installed the first generation night scopes on their FAL rifles. Gary took the hint and installed his MUNS. If he ever had the money, he was going to get 4th generation optics for the Tac-50 and his Super Match. Fortunately the MUNS were free because he knew what an AN/PVS-27 was and brought home two. You usually spent more on optic than the rifle just as you spent big bucks to get the very best antenna.

After the sun went down they left and drove toward downtown Tucson. They stopped about a mile away and divided into teams of two. It was a target rich environment. The problem was, they wanted targets that no one would notice going down. Gary and Bob were teamed together with Bob spotting. Bob pointed out a target on the roof of a building. Gary checked the range with his laser range finder and adjusted his hold accordingly. You could hear the crack of the bullet as it passed objects along the way, but the rifle hardly made a sound.

They moved to a new position and Bob pointed out another group of targets. Two magazines and 10 dead, presumably, enemy troops later, Gary’s right shoulder was getting pretty sore. He hoped the others were doing as well or better than he was. It was getting late, or early, depending on your viewpoint. Bob suggest that they call it a night.

They returned to the vehicles and waited for the others. Those homemade cans on the M-4’s and M16’s weren’t as quiet as they could be; at least Gary had thought he heard one of the rifles more than once. As hard of hearing as he was, if he heard them, others probably did, too. When everyone was back, they circled downtown from a distance and moved into a residential neighborhood north of downtown.

When they prepared the old pickups for the trip, they hadn’t even washed the windows. Unless someone lifted the hoods, the trucks looked like they wouldn’t even run. They picked a neighborhood with several vehicles parked on the street and dispersed their vehicles among the others. They moved into some homes and found more bodies. They were certain now that the enemy had systematically gone through Tucson and rounded up the residents. But, where were they keeping them? The Guardsmen took turns maintaining a watch. During the afternoon, a Jeep drove slowly down their street, but didn’t stop.

Of course, dropping the bridges on the interstates didn’t completely cut of the flow of traffic, but it sure slowed it down. All the enemy had to do was take a different exit ramp and drive a little further down a city street. They had thought of this and Bob and Gary were detailed to blow the first set of bridges on each of the interstates where they entered Tucson.

Gary wouldn’t be much help to Bob, but at least his shoulder would get a rest. Maybe he needed to beef up the padding in his jacket. They blew the overpasses at the 87 exit on I-19 and at the 273 exit on I-10. Bob suggested that they take out the exit near the 242

mile marker on I-10 north the next night if they could. They were back well before the others. The timers still had about 6 hours to go before the overpasses went. They hoped the others would be back before then.

“Hey partner, how’d it go?” Ron asked.

Gary must have been sleeping with his eyes open. He shook his head to clear it and asked Ron, “What did you say?”

“I asked how it went,” Ron chuckled.

“No problem. Bob set the charges,” Gary reported. “We didn’t see a soul.”

“When are they set to go off?” Ron asked.

Gary looked at his watch. “About 45 minutes Ron, you guys cut it pretty close getting back, it’s already daylight.”

“We had trouble finding targets,” Ron explained.

“You mean they were all hiding inside?” Gary asked.

“No, it’s more like a bunch of them bugged out during the day yesterday,” Ron said.

“Did you have any trouble?” Gary inquired.

“One of the guy’s really has noisy can,” Ron said, “And he took out a guy when there was someone within hearing range. Man, that Mexican soldier was ventilating the air, but he didn’t hit anyone.”

“You know, I thought I heard that rifle the night before,” Gary replied, “We’d better find out who the guy is with the bad silencer and either get it fixed or have him stop shooting.”

“Derek was there and he took out the Mexican soldier who fired,” Ron explained, “I think he has already taken care of it.”

There was a faint rumble in the distance. Gary looked at his watch.

“I’d say those overpasses just went down Ronald, my friend,” he said, “Bob wants to take out the overpass near the 242 mile marker tonight.”

“He may not have to,” Ron suggested.

“Oh? Why not?” Gary asked.

“Derek said that the Captain thinks the UN guys are headed back to Mexico,” Ron answered. “Oh, by the way, we found where they are keeping some of the Tucson residents. There’s a big Radisson Hotel next to the Convention Center Complex. The Colonel said he’d been in the place a while back. It has over 300 rooms and a huge meeting room area. He said they could probably put a couple of thousand people in the place. It was pretty well guarded, so that’s where we think they are.”

“If you’re right, we’d better try and take out those guards tonight,” Gary proposed, “If the UN is bugging out, there’s no telling whether they’ll just leave the people there or kill them. We have the Hummers; by the way, you did put them in garages again didn’t you?”

“Darn it Gar-Bear,” Ron chided, “Of course we did, leaving them on the street would be like waiving a red flag saying *Here we are; come and get us*. You worry too much.”

“Well, somebody has to, you all run around like a bunch of cowboys at times,” Gary retorted.

“We may look like cowboys and farmers,” Ron laughed, “But don’t let those feeble old eyes fool you. Anyway, the Colonel thinks that the UN guys were already in the process of leaving when we got here. So, maybe the turkey hunt is over.”

“You’re the only turkey I know,” Gary laughed.

“Gee Gar,” Ron laughed, “I didn’t know you cared.”

They holed up for the day and Bob told Gary towards sundown that the Colonel had nixed blowing up any more overpasses. They were going to see if they couldn’t take out the guards covering the Radisson. He also said that he wished the electricity were on; there wasn’t a radio station they could pick up on any of the portable radios.

They ate their MRE’s and an hour after sunset they headed back downtown. Ron had been right; most of the enemy vehicles were gone. Aside from the guards at the hotel, it appeared that the UN forces were only occupying a single building. Ron, Gary, Clarence and Derek held back to cover the troops when they rushed that single building.

It was lightly guarded and the people inside consisted of a few middle ranking officers and some enlisted people who were destroying records. The Iowa people took them out and moved on the Radisson. There were about 25 men guarding the exterior of the hotel. They went down in short order too. The Guardsmen cautiously entered the hotel and took out 5 more guards. They started kicking in doorways to the meeting rooms. They found hundreds of people in greatly emaciated condition. Apparently these Mexican and Chinese UN people didn’t believe in taking care of their prisoners.

When the Colonel announced that they were with the Iowa National Guard, many people broke down and wept. Finally a spokesman for the group came forward. He told the

Colonel that there had been about 3,600 hundred of them when they were first taken captive. At last count, their number had decreased to fewer than two thousand.

The Guardsmen went after their pickups. They had plenty of medical supplies. The group included some doctors and nurses and they used the supplies to tend to the injured. The people began to filter out of the hotel; they were dazed, disoriented and generally in need of a few good meals. The UN hadn't looted Tucson extensively and they were soon able to locate food for the residents in several grocery stores.

A few hours later, they left Tucson headed for Phoenix. The Colonel wanted to report what they'd seen in Tucson to higher authorities. They were stopped at a military roadblock south of Phoenix. The Colonel produced his ID and they were given an escort to Luke AFB. For the next 12 hours, the Guardsmen were debriefed. The information was immediately forwarded to the Joint Chiefs. They stayed over for a day, refreshed their stores and headed back to Sun Valley. They carried a long-range radio with them. The Army told them they would be in touch.

After The Big One – Chapter 6 – Fallout

The men were reluctant to discuss how many of the enemy they had shot the two nights they had been sniping. It had been a target rich environment the first night and Gary had shot 10 enemy soldiers. Had they compared notes, they would have learned that Derek had taken out the largest number of the enemy, 17.

Most of the Guardsmen had taken out 5 enemy or fewer. Ron had taken out 2 and Clarence 1. The total was 317. The second night hadn't been target rich and they only took out 14 of the enemy. Derek led the count with 2. The third night they had taken out 17 enemy at the UN HQ, and 30 at the Radisson.

"I'm glad you're back ok," Sharon greeted Gary, "How was the trip?"

"Long. Tiring," Gary replied. "We rescued about 2,000 people that the UN had penned up in the Radisson Hotel."

"Are they ok?" She asked.

"They will be," Gary replied.

"How did the sniping go?" Sharon ventured.

"It went," Gary curtly replied.

Gary's short, barely responsive replies to her questions told Sharon that he didn't want to talk about the trip. Years of marriage had taught her not to press. She just watched. Gary took a shower, and then took his meds. She noticed him get the Xanax bottle and shake out an extra tablet.

He flopped in his recliner to watch the news and was sleeping in minutes. Gary slept for 11 hours. He got up, went to the bathroom, took his meds (2 Xanax again) ate two slices of toast with peanut butter and drank a cup of coffee. He crawled into his bed and slept for 9 more hours.

The Guardsmen had rested and then had gone to Holbrook. They found the only barber still in town and sat patiently all day while he gave them all regulation haircuts. When they got back to Sun Valley, they crawled back into their uniforms, Colonel's orders. They hooked the long-range radio up to Gary's Diamond D-130J and waited to hear from the Army.

They didn't have to wait long; the next day they received orders to report to the ANG unit in Flagstaff. Immediately. The Guardsmen packed their things; they didn't have much, got aboard one of the borrowed school busses and the Hummers and departed for Camp Navajo. They left the long-range radio and the weapons they'd taken from the Show Low Armory, it was less to explain. Derek told Mary that he would keep in touch

the best he could.

The sleep did Gary a world of good and got him out of his funk. He wasn't depressed about the 10 men he'd shot; it was those bodies in the homes and the 1,600 Tucsonites that the UN had slaughtered that got to him. One of the definitions of depression is that depression is anger turned inward. Gary wasn't depressed now; he was wearing his anger on his sleeve. He was careful though, to channel that anger. He directed it, as he should, in statements he made against the UN invasion.

The UN had capitulated. The French had started it; far too many of their force had disappeared in the southeast. Rebel militia had finally organized into larger groups and taken them almost head-on. The rebels were better armed than the French!

It was the same everywhere in the country. Gang bangers in LA came out of south central and east LA and set aside their differences long enough to chew up the Chinese pretty good. In New England, those rural folks picked off the Germans an individual and a patrol at a time. They stopped taking time to hide the bodies and the effect was even more dramatic.

The Russians had pulled out of the south and headed home, saying nothing to anyone. The skippers of the Los Angeles class submarines, seeing troops standing on the deck, had withheld their torpedoes, the President had been clear about letting the UN forces leave.

The French and Germans had conducted themselves according to the established conventions. They had sat on the Muslim units merged with their forces and prevented any atrocities. For their part, the Muslims had taken the blunt of the American ire. The Americans remembered the deaths and casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan and when they were forced to choose between attacking the Germans or French and an Arab unit, the Germans and French always came out on top and were spared for that day.

The FBI had finally gotten off of its behind and tracked down the Palestinians who had set off all of the ANFO car bombs when the UN invaded. The government had cleaned out a cellblock in Leavenworth and they were stuffed away in cells, without the benefit of a trial, to rot.

The government cooks at Leavenworth, in a particularly nasty move, fed them Spam three times a day. Some refused to eat and literally starved to death. The Germans, the French, the Spanish, the Italians and their Muslim supporters were allowed to leave. Submarine skippers in the Pacific had different orders; the Chinese were allowed to leave, but none made it past Hawaii.

The President hadn't liked what he'd heard in the PDB about their behavior in Tucson. American LA class submarines took up positions in the Sea of Japan and off the American coast. A single nuclear tipped Tomahawk cruise missile was launched against Bei-

jing and another against Mexico City. (Bet you thought we'd destroyed those warheads didn't you? Hah!)

FOX news was reporting that the UN forces had suffered more casualties than had the Americans during the yearlong UN Police action. None of the news channels reported the missile attacks Beijing or Mexico City. Oh, and that Russian bombing of Chicago? They'd managed to drop 4 bombs on the Sears Tower and 2 on the John Hancock Building. Both buildings were still standing.

The Iowa Guardsmen were released from active duty and flown back to Iowa. All but SSgt. Derek Olsen. His 4-year re-enlistment was up, but, like a fool, he had signed up for 4 more.

He headed to Sun Valley to pick up his family and return to Iowa. The nice thing about that promotion was that he would now command his own tank. If Mary was upset about his re-enlistment (she certainly was) she hid it well.

Paula and Mark returned to Austin, Jennifer and Brenda and their families to Ft. Smith. Amy and Lorrie returned to Palmdale, too. Kevin and John stayed on, as did Damon.

There weren't many jobs to be had in the Holbrook area and that suited the three younger men just fine. Of the three, only John was a willing worker anyway. Carrie started raising hell about the kids and Damon reluctantly drove them back to Iowa. He left the van sit in Mason City and rode back to Sun Valley in style, on his Harley.

It was early July 2008 and the residents of Holbrook were returning to their homes. They found their pickups right where they'd left them, but for some reason many of them had new batteries and ran a lot better than when they'd left. The school busses were back on the lot, but a lot of diesel fuel was missing and the odometers had a lot of extra miles on them.

Gary, Ron and Clarence had seen to it that everything was restored as near to normal as possible. Nichols was missing some Remington 870 pistol grips and it looked like someone had used his equipment extensively, but nothing else was missing. Gary and Ron walked in one day and asked him how much the 870 pistol grips were. He told them the price, but said he didn't have any. They told him that they had borrowed 3 and paid him for them.

Kevin and John each had their own trailer now and Ron and Linda were glad to have them out from under their feet. Damon also occupied a trailer. With Holbrook returning to near normal, John finally got a job as a night security guard at the power plant. Neither Kevin nor Damon was seriously looking for work.

The phone service was back and Gary called the bank in Iowa. He learned that his balance was a little over \$25,000. A trip to the Wells Fargo bank in Holbrook revealed that the government had finally resumed the Social Security payments and he had an entire

year's worth of Social Security Disability payments, Iowa Pension payments and Sharon's Disney Pension payments. They were rich! (It's all relative, he had 25k plus 30k.)

Gary and Ron asked Damon and Kevin to clean out the empty trailers. After waiting for two weeks, the men did it themselves. The only time they saw the boys was at meal times. John insisted on paying Ron rent on his trailer. At least that covered the food that he ate and a little more besides.

With the trailers cleaned out, the men took stock of their food and firearms inventories. They had used some ammunition, but not enough to justify buying more. The food was a different story. They didn't have 5 pounds of beans among the three of them. Their freezers were completely empty, too. They had stretched the food as far as possible, but the Guardsmen hadn't been planned for. They had made more than one trip to Holbrook and Show Low and Snowflake keeping food on the table. This called for a trip to Phoenix to visit Costco.

On August 1st Clarence and Lucy, Ron and Linda and Gary and Sharon set off for Costco in Phoenix. A sign on the door said, "Costco closed for restocking. Reopening August 2nd." They had a day to kill so they got motel rooms, and the women set off in one pickup and the men in another to shop. Not knowing what the situation would be vis-à-vis checks and their ATM cards, the men had brought cash; lots of cash. Gary was looking for 4th generation night scopes. Gary wanted that scope, but there was no way he was willing to shell out \$7,500 for it.

They did a lot of looking, but none of the three spent any money. Eventually they returned to the motel and waited for the women to arrive. Sharon came dragging six packages into the motel room. She went back to the pickup and dragged in 7 more. She started to explain about all of her 'bargains' as she always did, but Gary gently cut her off. He was sure, he told her, that she'd done very well for herself. She asked what he'd found and he said, nothing.

Costco was open the next morning and they bought lots of coffee, flour, sugar, rice, pinto beans, shortening, oil, and paper products. They would have bought a lot more, but their pickups were full. The wives made up lists of things they wanted but didn't have room for and the three families returned to Sun Valley. They unloaded their purchases into the basements and called it a night.

The next morning, Sharon was on Gary from the moment he got up. Linda and Lucy and she had already talked and no doubt Clarence and Ron were getting a dose of the same. The women wanted to return to Phoenix for all of the things they hadn't gotten. The Three Amigos ate breakfast and headed to Holbrook to pull more cash out of their Wells Fargo accounts. They were back by 10:30 am and in Phoenix by 1:30 pm. The women went down their lists and filled the trucks nearly to overflowing.

Gary was a business member and he checked with the courtesy counter about Costco delivering a truckload of paper products to Sun Valley. They didn't deliver paper and

food products and Sun Valley was outside of their service area. But, he could make the purchases and they would have them shipped by common carrier to Sun Valley, freight collect. The three men talked it over and bought several pallets of toilet tissue, paper towels and Kleenex. They figured that they couldn't drive to Phoenix for twice what the freight would be, never mind the wear and tear on their vehicles or the amount of time it would take.

A call to Walton Feed revealed a 6-week delivery delay. They placed the orders and asked Walton's to ship the oxygen absorbers right away, they had food to preserve. Before his basement filled up too full to work around, Gary painted the walls with a white concrete sealer. Then he built shelves to hold everything he had and had on order.

When the oxygen absorbers arrived, the men transferred the flour, sugar, beans and pasta products to Mylar bags in the empty white pails and added the absorbers. They forced the air out and sealed the bags. The paper products had been transferred to the basements by a human chain tossing the packages, one at a time, from person to person. It took them a whole day to move the stuff to the basements and restack it.

The feeder cattle were big enough to butcher and they filled their freezers. Each man bought several cases of primal pork cuts, e.g., loins, butts, etc. and added them, after processing and vacuum wrapping to the freezers. Each now had a freezer in their basement and a freezer in the shelter.

They bought chickens by the case, vacuum-packed them and finished filling the freezers. The orders didn't arrive from Walton's until late September. Gary had money left over burning a hole in his pocket and he bought a second Super Match M1A and another standard M1A. He was up to 3 sniper rifles, 8 MBRs, those 4 AR-15's and 6; count them, 6 M16A2 rifles from the Armory in Show Low. He hauled the new Super Match down to that less than honest dealer in Phoenix and had a suppressor installed. He added identical scopes to the rifle as he had on his first Super Match.

Diesel was all the way down to 2.399 and they filled the diesel tank. It took 3 3,000-gallon deliveries to refill their propane tanks. Gary was comfortable now. Broke as always, but comfortable.

"Gary, what I want to know is how come we stocked up all of the supplies again," Clarence asked. "I went along, but do you really think we're going to have more trouble?"

"I don't have the slightest idea Clarence," Gary laughed, "But you can never have too many pinto beans."

"Yeah Clarence," Ron kidded, "And everyone should have 14 thousand gallons of propane, right Gar-Bear?"

"I only have 42,000-gallons," Gary protested.

“Never mind,” Ron said. Apparently Gary didn’t remember what he had said to the men to get them to buy those extra propane tanks.

The world was an interesting place in the middle of September of 2008. Bush was essentially a lame duck President, the Republican and Democrat candidates were in a dead tie in the polls, and the American populace was trying to dig out and restore the country after the yearlong fight with the occupying UN forces. There was very little damage to the infrastructure. There were the buildings in Chicago to repair and some freeway overpasses in the Tucson area to rebuild. Congress was talking about forcing the Navy to mothball the Iowa class battleships again but Bush said not on his watch, he’d veto any such legislation; he didn’t care what they tied it to.

Neither China nor Mexico was able to figure out the source of the nuclear weapons that had taken out Beijing and Mexico City. They suspected the United States, but both Russia and the United States had similar weapons and they couldn’t be absolutely sure. Besides, hadn’t the US destroyed the nuclear warheads for their cruise missiles?

Mexico could spare the people and patience was a Chinese virtue. The French had lost another war, what was new about that? Spain and Italy had little to say on the subject. The Germans wanted to sell more cars in the US and were trying to reestablish diplomatic relations with America. The Arab nations were foaming at the mouth, their rhetoric increasing daily. Israel was looking for a new Sugar Daddy, having split with the US, apparently for good.

The US government refused to allow International flights. International shipping was slowly resumed, but Customs inspected each and every container. Trust was a thing of the past. The American importers bitched to high heaven, but the Department of Homeland Security just said tough; don’t bitch at us about bombs at celebrations if you won’t let us inspect imports.

Tom Ridge had organized the department pretty well. Even Chertoff couldn’t screw it up. The deficiencies had been identified by the 9/11 Commission, the Labor Day Massacre Commission and by Congressional hearings. The biggest problems, aside from unwillingness to share intelligence, had been the compromises made to satisfy demands of the American public. The new Secretary of Homeland Security and a recalcitrant President changed all that. The best place to fight terrorism was at home by keeping the terrorists out.

If it were only that easy! The rhetoric coming from the Arab and Muslim nations was steadily increasing. This gave Bush the leverage to push a bill through Congress to increase the Army from 10 to 15 Divisions. The news media had a field day with that bill.

Apparently not all of the liberals had changed their spots. They had even more to chew on when a second bill was pushed through Congress increasing military pay and benefits. The three men in Sun Valley were very happy to see both bills pass Congress and be signed into law by President Bush.

With International trade being allowed once more, it wouldn't be too long before the world would be expecting the US to be the world's policeman. Somewhere along the line, calls to try Bush for war crimes had ceased. Maybe it was those bombings in Paris, Marseilles, and Berlin that did the trick.

The new Democratic President, Obama, tried to select a cabinet that would overcome some of the disgust that some Americans felt about him becoming President after jumping ship from the Republican Party. A RINO, it only made sense for McCain to change parties anyway.

The Democrats may have won the Presidency, but moderate and conservative Republicans controlled the House and Senate. McCain had voted for increasing the size of the Army and for the increased pay and benefits.

Gary hadn't voted for McCain. He sort of liked the guy, but he'd not vote for a party switcher, especially not for someone who had switched from the Republican Party to the Democrat Party. Still McCain had the right idea on some things. He was having trouble imagining what it would be like to have McCain as President. Time would soon tell.

In his inaugural speech McCain told the American public that he wouldn't rush off half cocked into a war. If we were going, we were going with a single mission in mind, to win. There wouldn't be any more Vietnam's or Somalia's or Second Gulf War's that ended in America withdrawing without achieving the original mission.

Neither would there be any duplicity about why America was going to war. There would be no more failed searches for WMD's. The public would see pictures of the WMD's before we went if that were the excuse for going to war. Yeah right Mr. President; can I have some of what you're smoking? We've heard all of that before!

With the new pay and benefit structure, the Army didn't have trouble in filling the slots for the five additional divisions. The only problem was getting the men and women trained. All of a sudden, reenlistments were at an all time high, freeing some of those training resources.

Derek called his father. He was thinking of going back to the Army fulltime. Gary didn't like that one little bit, no sir. But it was Derek's choice in the end and Derek decided to do it. Gary was not a happy camper. But, Derek went in as a Staff Sergeant and he got his own Abrams M1A2SEP to command. And, he was stationed at Ft. Bliss part of the 1st Armored Division, not all that far away.

The American economy was booming. More troops meant more military equipment and more military equipment meant more money in the economy turning over 7 or 8 times. This increased the demand for consumer goods and McCain was forced to reestablish diplomatic relations with Germany and resume relations with Great Britain.

France wanted to reestablish relations, too, but that was going too far. The Italians and the Australians were producing good wines these days anyway. The liberals didn't like it, not one bit. They wanted their Brie and their Dom Pérignon.

There were more terrorist explosions in Europe, too. Could it be that America was becoming too hard to infiltrate and the Arabs or Muslims or whoever they were wanted easier targets?

Everyone allowed entry into the US had to have the new passport with the imbedded biometric data and had to be fingerprinted and approved before a Visa was issued. No one could enter the US without that Visa. And the Visa wasn't just a stamp in the passport anymore; it was a separate plastic card with an encoded data chip using 2,048-bit encryption.

The US government still stamped the passports, of course, and entered the code number for the card in the space provided. They even applied a plastic pocket over the stamp to prevent alteration of the stamp and to hold the plastic card.

Well, don't kid yourself. The United States has thousands of miles of borders. Even with military patrols, some people were bound to slip through. McCain pushed legislation through that created a National Identity Card. The card came in its own little booklet that looked suspiciously like the old American passport. The inside cover of the NIC booklet had the same information as a passport and that information was overlaid with the same plastic pocket to carry the actual NIC. There were even blank pages like in a passport. What were those for?

Anyway, some enterprising fellows in Egypt got their hands on the new American NIC and while they couldn't decode the information, it wasn't that difficult to produce duplicates of the NIC booklet and cards. They left the cards empty of data.

LEO's were all equipped with card readers that could decode the 2,048 bit encrypted data on the cards but as these things go, sometimes the readers didn't work and sometimes they were just too lazy to check the cards. After all, if you had the booklet, the card must match, mustn't it?

As with all things intended to secure America, there was a hue and cry over the NIC's. But not having a NIC in your possession was a violation of the Patriot Act and people eventually caved in. Besides, the NIC's made dandy check cashing ID, there wasn't any question who you were.

Ron and Clarence lamented what our society was coming to. Gary, surprisingly, wasn't opposed to the NIC; it was a small sacrifice to make for security. Besides, the laws enacted to control abuses of the system were draconian. Murder was almost a lesser crime than to attempt to deprive a citizen of his or her rights using NIC data. Some of those fundamental Christian Preacher's were opposed to the NIC, too. They called it the Mark of the Beast. After a few of them ended up in jail for refusing to provide their NIC's

to proper authorities, that changed too.

Those Egyptians were Arabs and Muslims, weren't they? Pretty soon terrorists had the phony documents and were making their way across the Canadian and Mexican borders. And, after an initial period of checking everyone's NIC, the LEO's became slack. There were a lot of Americans of Middle Eastern descent and the new people just blended in and went to ground. The sudden increase in thefts at quarries and mines was attributed to Survivalists and Hate Groups. No one ever thought that the US was slowly being invaded one more time by terrorists.

In Sun Valley, the men had purchased some horses; it was one of Sharon's ideas. Gar-Bear did the Winchester .45 Colt rifle/Colt SAA thing for both Sharon and him. He needed Ron until he caved in and bought a used Colt SAA and a Marlin rifle and then started in on Clarence. Clarence got tired of it quickly and bought himself a used Vaquero and a used Winchester rifle. Gary had those new M1A rifles and he wanted some .45 Colt ammo so he spent some more money on ammo. They rotated their food stores and only went to Phoenix quarterly to fill in. Life was good. They were ready, come what may.

Actually, it came in May. May 2010 to be precise. The Army had its 15 Divisions and the Air Force, Navy and Marines weren't accepting new enlistees. America had gotten lazy one more time. Well, maybe not all of America, but the government certainly had. Despite public pressure to resume air travel McCain and Congress refused. The only air travel permitted was the military and airfreight and no passengers were allowed on the air freighters. That was a boon to rail traffic and new high-speed trains were being brought online practically weekly.

On Saturday, May 1, 2010, a Ryder rental truck holding an estimated 3 tons of oxygen enriched ANNM initiated by Tovex exploded outside the Federal Building at 11000 Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood. The 17-story, 600,000 square foot building suffered serious damage. So did Federal Buildings around the United States.

People were killed and the buildings rendered uninhabitable, and the federal government was hamstrung. It was the Labor Day Massacre all over again. As many people died and were injured. And those government organs that investigated crimes of this nature lost hundreds of staff. CNN took all of 5 minutes to generate a new graphic; they were calling this the May Day Massacre. Not very creative, but it struck a chord. Most Americans alive could remember the Labor Day Massacre of 2005, less than 5 years before. As far as that went, most Americans alive could remember September 11, 2001.

Airfreight traffic was grounded. Train travel was halted. People found out what those blank pages in the back of their NIC booklets were for. Can you say Travel Permits? McCain issued an Executive Order, prepared at the time that the NIC's were adopted, limiting travel to within 20 miles of one's home.

Now, if you were an Iowa farmer or a retiree in Sun Valley, Arizona, 20 miles was plenty far to travel. But, if you were a resident of Palmdale, California and worked in Los Angeles, you had to have a travel permit. LEO's no longer looked the other way on the NIC issue. If you couldn't produce your NIC booklet and NIC, or the card failed to read or the reader was broken, the handcuffs went on.

One hell of a lot of Americans got a rude surprise on the afternoon of May 1, 2010 when the LEO's clamped down. They were jailed and had to call a friend or relative to retrieve their NIC booklet and NIC. They were fingerprinted and their iris scanned and they were po'd, even after they were let go.

On May 2, 2010, FOX News broke the story that one of those arrested was apparently a foreign national whose NIC had never been encoded in the first place. This person was, they claimed, a Sunni Muslim with ties to the late Saddam Hussein. The FBI scurried to deny the report; they had no such individual in custody.

No, but the LAPD did and their suspect came back positive for nitrates on tests they ran on his body and on his clothes. The individual was actually a Shi'ite with ties to the Badr Corps, but FOX was sort of right, he was an Iraqi. CNN played catch-up and came closer; they got the Shi'ite part correct.

In Sun Valley Ron, Gary and Clarence were once again glued to the news. They were switching between FOX and CNN and didn't know whom to believe. Sheppard Smith was saying one thing and Wolf Blitzer something else. The only thing they agreed on was that the person in custody was an Iraqi.

"It's all George Bush's fault!" Gary said, "If he hadn't invaded Iraq on a pretext, none of this would have happened."

"Off with his head," Ron joked.

"Darn it Ronald, will you be serious?" Gary said. "This probably will mean a third war with Iraq and darn it again, my kid is in the Army."

"I don't think so Gary," Clarence said quietly.

"Don't think so what?" Gary asked.

"I don't think Derek is going to end up in Iraq," Clarence suggested.

"What do you think is going to happen?" Gary asked.

"I'm not sure Gary, but I don't think John McCain will send our troops to Iraq," Clarence persisted.

"What do you think, will he nuke them?" Ron asked.

“I don’t think so,” Clarence said. “I do think that he will keep his promise and get his facts straight before he acts, though.”

“What about those rumors that Bush dropped nukes on China and Mexico?” Ron asked.

“What about it Ron?” Clarence said, “They never proved who launched those nukes. It could have been us or the Russians.”

“Why would the Russians nuke China and Mexico?” Gary asked, “They were allies.”

“How about to get the US blamed for it?” Clarence suggested.

“They couldn’t blame the US for it, we eliminated our cruise missile carriers back before the 1990’s,” Ron insisted.

In point of fact: The enduring nuclear weapon stockpile contains thirteen systems within nine weapon classes. The W84, which is in the inactive stockpile (IS), is also listed. Its carrier, the ground-launched cruise missile, was eliminated by the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1988. The 2001 Nuclear Posture Review indicated that the inactive stockpile will consist of warhead types in the active stockpile plus the W84 and B83 Mod 0, which have no active stockpile counterparts. The W62 warhead will be retired in FY09.

Who was to say that the Navy hadn’t adapted a submarine launched cruise missile to carry the W-84 warhead? Would John McCain use more of the nonexistent Tomahawk nuclear cruise missiles (TLAM-N)? Would he invade Iraq again? No to both questions; John McCain was cleverer than that. He’d get someone else to do it for him and they wouldn’t even know they were doing it at the behest of the United States, clever fellow this John McCain.

After The Big One – Chapter 7 – Forged Documents

Clarence had been right. McCain made a speech on national TV saying that as soon as they had absolute proof of who was behind the explosions on May Day he would act. He also said the American public would know exactly what proof he had.

Privately, McCain already knew. He had the FBI turn the prisoner over to the CIA. The CIA really wasn't authorized to do much within the US borders so they tended, when convenient, to ignore the laws. This was one of those times.

I don't know what you've heard about the efficiency of the latest drugs, but let me tell you; used in the proper combination a person can remember every detail from his or her past and has no reluctance to tell all. The next morning the PDB contained everything McCain wanted to know. Now, he just had to prove it. He gave his speech and got the FBI moving on locating the other members of the prisoner's cell.

Finding the people didn't prove to be easy. One by one they had them and there was plenty of space in Leavenworth and lots of that Spam left over. There were the CIA's drugs, too. They taped the statements and when they had enough statements that didn't sound like the individual was under the influence of drugs, McCain went back on TV.

He played portions of the tapes and told the American public that he was furnishing the tapes to Congress. If they authorized it, he would take action against Iraq. Very clever, Mr. President; how could the Congress not authorize the use of force against Iraq? In the meantime, McCain checked with the Joint Chiefs. Did the US have any of those Iraqi Scud missiles left?

"Yes Mr. President," the Chairman said, "We have four that we haven't disassembled yet."

"Good," the President said, "Will they fit in a C-5A?"

"That's how we got them to this country Mr. President," the Chairman said, "Why do you ask?"

"Bear with me General." McCain said. "Can your people check them out and make sure they'll fly?"

"We already have Mr. President," the Chairman said, "What do you have in mind?"

"Load them on Galaxies, General and fly them to Iraq," McCain said, "I intend to use those Iraqi missiles to even our score with Iraq."

"But Mr. President, we have LA class submarines with a lot better missiles than those Scuds," the Chairman protested.

“They might be better missiles General but the Scuds are just perfect for what I have in mind,” McCain replied, “Let me explain...”

“I’ve been in this man’s Army for 34 years Mr. President,” the General commented when McCain had finished explaining his plan, “And that’s the most devious thing I think we’ve ever done. Are you sure that they will fall for it?”

“Are you kidding General? They’ve been itching to use those play pretties of theirs for years,” McCain laughed.

The Army and Air Force checked out those four Scuds with a fine toothcomb. They’d fly all right. With American fuel in them they would fly further, too. The warheads weren’t very reliable, however, and the US quickly worked them over to make them more powerful and far more reliable. When they were finished, the four Scud missiles were flown to Iraq.

The C-5A’s landed on an old runway in the area of Al Rutbah near the Jordanian border. The four C-5A’s took off and a C-130 stood by with its engines running. The American specialists launched the four Scud missiles and boarded the plane. The C-130 was over Jordan when the Scuds landed on Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Dimona and Haifa. The Israelis had tracked the missiles from launch. It was a terrible thing those Americans had done taking back those Patriot missiles. They launched fighters in a vain attempt to stop the Scuds. The missiles struck and exploded, killing hundreds.

The Israelis had had enough. They brought 8 nukes from storage and loaded them aboard 4 F-15I’s. The planes left for Iraq, over flying Jordanian air space. They dropped the bombs on Al Basrah, An Nasiriyah, An Najaf, Karbala, Ar Ramadi, Tikrit, Al Fallujah and Baghdad. The C-130 flew to Athens, refueled and headed for Great Britain. It refueled again at a British air base and headed for the US.

The bombings of the Iraqi cities caused the world to condemn Israel. President McCain went back on American TV and told the American public that in light of the Israelis over response to a Scud missile attack by the Iraqis, he saw no point to attacking Iraq. All of the targets he favored had been destroyed. He apologized for not acting sooner.

“I’m sorry General,” McCain said, “But they don’t hand out any fifth stars these days.”

“That’s alright Mr. President,” the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs said. “I was going to retire and become one of those paid military commentators on CNN. It pays better than the Army anyway.”

After the President’s TV speech, Clarence turned to Gary and said, “See, I told you.”

“That was just a fluke,” Gary insisted, “The Iraqis attacked Israel. Man was that dumb.”

“Gary,” Ron said, “The US seized all of the Iraqi Scud missiles and flew them back to

the US for testing back in 2004.”

“Oh. You mean...” Gary started to ask. Ron and Clarence were nodding their heads in the affirmative.

“Hmm,” Gary thought, “I may have to end up voting for a Democrat. Not!”

“Did they catch all of those bombers?” Gary asked.

“Don’t know. Don’t care,” Ron said, “The FBI is still a joke and so is Homeland Security. Hell, we have to have a Passport with us at all times and we even have to get permission to go anywhere. I don’t like it.”

“I was in favor of a National ID Card,” Gary said, “But I never imagined that it would turn into this. I agree with you on that partner, it just doesn’t make sense to have to get permission to drive to Phoenix.”

“That’s the trouble with government,” Clarence added, “You give them an inch, they take a mile.”

“I don’t know whether I should be more worried about the bombers that got away or about the government,” Gary admitted.

“Keep it simple, stupid,” Ron suggested, “Just shoot any ragheads you see and stay away from LEO’s.”

“You know, it wouldn’t be all that hard to make our own rubber stamp,” Gary was thinking out loud, “In that movie ‘The Great Escape’, the allied prisoners made their own and we have more equipment than they did.”

“They log all of the travel permits,” Clarence protested.

“Yeah, but do they check them against the log?” Gary countered. “I don’t think so.”

Gary had a box full of old rubber stamps that he’d accumulated over the years. He didn’t know why he hadn’t thrown them away when they moved from California. He cleaned the ink off one with some alcohol and examined it with a magnifying glass. It would take time, but he was sure he could make one with his Dremel tool and an Exacto knife.

But what could he use for material? He could always peel the stamp part off of an old handle and glue a new stamp back in its place. Maybe he could use a side casing from a used tire? He decided to check out a couple of places in Holbrook that made rubber stamps the next time he went to town.

Around the US, unrest was growing. People had put up with the NIC’s, but the Travel Permits were the straw that broke the camel’s back. Some people who made rubber

stamps were doing a land office business making copies of the stamps. It was a case of independently minded American citizens telling the government to go screw itself. It was like the ban on large capacity magazines in California. You could always go to a gun show in Nevada or Arizona and buy all you wanted back when. Who did the government think they were fooling?

The next time the three of them went into Holbrook, they took time to inquire about rubber stamps. While they were visiting with the fella in the office supply store, Ron shook his head imperceptively and Gary never brought up the subject of getting materials to make his own stamp.

The kits that they sold in the store only made 3 and 4 line address stamps; they wouldn't do at all. The kid at the small shopping mall was a different story all together. He claimed that he could make any kind of stamp anyone wanted. He showed them the equipment he had bought to set up his business. He didn't have all that much equipment. He said that he had enlisted in the Army and guessed that he was going to have to store the equipment; no one wanted to buy it.

"How much did you have to pay for that equipment?" Gary asked.

"I got it on sale," the kid said, "\$300 plus shipping. Of course, I bought a lot of extra materials, so my investment is more than that."

"How much would you take for the whole shooting match, cash money?" Gary asked.

"\$750?" the kid said hesitantly.

"Tell you what kid, if you'll deliver it, I'll buy it," Gary offered.

"Where do you live mister? And what is your name?" the kid asked.

"I live over in Sun Valley kid. And my name? You can just call me Mister, mister," Gary replied.

"I'll be over after I close up tonight," the kid said, "How do I find your place?"

"What time will you be there?" Gary asked.

"Oh, maybe 10pm," the kid said.

"I'll be waiting at the entrance to the tract," Gary said. "Bring everything you have."

The three old geezers finished their shopping in Holbrook and headed back to Sun Valley.

"I just loved that line, *You can call me Mister, mister,*" Ron laughed, "*My friends just call*

me Hank.”

“I’ll have to admit the song was running through my mind when I said that,” Gary joined in the laughter.

“What you fellas laughing about?” Clarence asked.

“Oh nothing,” Gary said, “Just an old Country Western song.”

Clarence wore the western style clothes. He even wore the cowboy gun. But Clarence was not into country music. Some of it sounded like some fella whose foot had just been run over by a pickup. He favored Ella and the Platters and music no one had listened to in 50 years. Oh well, to each his own.

The kid was a few minutes late in arriving. Gary met him at the entrance to the tract and led him back to his home. They hauled all the equipment, there wasn’t much, to the basement and the kid taught Gary how to make rubber stamps. You needed a computer to use the graphics software and a printer to print the transparencies, but Gary had all of that. Before midnight, Gary could make any stamp he had a desired to make. He gave the kid the \$750 and just before the kid left, he handed Gary a 1.44mb floppy disk. There were some stamps on the disk, the kid said. They might come in handy.

One of the problems associated with needing a Travel Permit for almost everywhere you went was that it filled up the NIC booklets very quickly. People who were authorized to issue the permits, LEO’s, had bundles of extra pages that could be inserted into the back of the NIC booklet. The pages stuck to the previous pages by means of a small adhesive flap. When the booklets filled up, the LEO’s removed the extra pages, placed them in a file with your name on it and kept the file for reference.

The next morning after breakfast, Gary checked the contents of the floppy. Holy crap, the kid had a copy of every Travel Permit that had ever been issued. To prevent people from doing what Gary was planning to do, the Rubber Stamps were changed every quarter. Whoever was doing the changes, Gary noticed, wasn’t all that creative.

Obviously, the kid had gotten a new Travel Permit each quarter in his NIC and had scanned it into his computer and cleaned up the image to eliminate the handwriting. Well hell, Gary could do that, it was an easy software program to use and he had the scanner in his 4 in 1 printer. The kid had also tossed down a medium sized cardboard box but hadn’t opened it. Gary opened it up and found a couple hundred of the Travel Permit NIC extension packets. They were set.

Maybe it was time to start a new war. This time against the oppressive government that President McCain was slowly orchestrating into power. “Maybe,” Gary thought, “That’s what I didn’t like about that guy. He’s slick. Too slick, if you ask me.” Gary went ahead and ran off a transparency for the current Travel Permit stamp. An hour later he had a new blank stamp in his NIC. He took the stamp and a stamp pad with him when he went

to show Ron and Clarence.

“How about we go over to Flagstaff today?” Gary suggested.

“I don’t want to fool around in town getting a travel permit,” Ron said, “Besides, what reason would we give them for traveling to Flagstaff? You have to give them a reason for the trip.”

“Let me see your NIC,” Gary said.

Ron handed it over. “What do you want to see that for?” he asked.

Gary stamped the inkpad and stamped Ron’s NIC. “There you go partner. Clarence, give me your NIC.”

Gary added a Travel Permit to Clarence’s NIC and filled in the two Permits himself so the handwriting was all the same.

“Ready to go?” he asked.

“Dang,” Ron laughed, “You’re a counterfeiter now. Sure let’s go. Why are we going to Flagstaff anyway?”

“That’s where the kid got his extra stamp supplies,” Gary said. “We wouldn’t want to run out.”

Twice LEO’s stopped the men, once entering Flagstaff and a second time at a road-block in Winslow. Both times the LEO’s looked at Travel Permits and waived them on. “Screw John McCain,” Gary thought.

The rubber stamp Travel Permits were only good for a 200-mile radius from the office issuing the Permit. Longer trips required that you go to a Federal office and be issued what amounted to a VISA, what a pain in the butt. Not only did you have to make the trip to get the VISA, you had to pay a \$50 fee for it.

The actual VISA’s were non-descript Smart Cards with the word VISA on the front. Those might be had, but the 2,048-bit encrypted data was a problem. So far, as far as the three old Geezers knew, no one had been able to break the encryption scheme.

Gary was surfing the web one night, it came back up when the phones came back up, and he inadvertently typed in a wrong address. Whoa. This site had a download that broke the 2,048-bit encryption scheme. At least that’s what it claimed. He didn’t hesitate for a moment before downloading the program.

He bookmarked the site, but when he tried to get back on it a couple of nights later, the site was down. Gary didn't usually go to E-bay but that night he decided to look around. Someone had an auction going on Smart Cards. "Popular Patterns" the description said.

Gary bid on the cards just as the auction was set to expire. He gave the phony name he used for the rented mail drop he had in Holbrook and waited. The cards would be coming COD. Four days later, he went in to check on the cards. The package was waiting for him. He forked over the money and took the package home.

When he got home, he opened the box and found the "Popular Patterns." He had 60 of the Smart Cards with the VISA logo printed on the front of them. Now, he had to get a card reader and hook it up to his computer. The software download unzipped to a program that brought up a screen.

You had to fill in the blanks and scan in a set of your fingerprints and a copy of your right Iris. The fingerprints were easy enough but he wasn't sure about the Iris image. He had Sharon take a Polaroid photo of his right Iris and scanned the picture into his computer. A little manipulation with his Readiris software, a graphics program that came with his HP G 85xi 4 in 1, produced an acceptable image. He converted the file to the appropriate format and he was ready to download data to a blank VISA. The only problem was he didn't have a Smart Card reader, let alone a Smart Card Writer.

The first of the quarter came and the Three Amigos went to Holbrook to get Travel Permits for their quarterly trip to Costco in Phoenix. There was a large box of the clear plastic VISA cardholders sitting on the floor and when the Deputy wasn't looking, Gary grabbed a large handful and stuffed them in his jacket pocket. That night after they got back from Phoenix, Gary scanned the new travel stamp, cleaned it up and made a new stamp. They were good for another 3 months of unrestricted travel within a 200-mile radius.

Gary started to hang out on E-Bay a lot. You could find all sorts of things on E-Bay, most of them legal, some not. Card readers were legal, but Smart Card writers were illegal. Late one night or early one morning depending upon how you looked at it, an ad popped up for a 'Complete' Smart Card reader. The seller had set a floor price that was about 4 times the going rate for a Smart Card reader.

Gary took a chance and bid on the item. Apparently, the price was too high for everyone else and his bid was successful. He wondered what 'Complete' meant. He hoped he was right in his surmise. Four days later he again traveled to his rental mailbox in Holbrook. When he got the box home, he opened it. There was a better than even chance he had just been ripped off, but, not this time. Inside the box was a new Smart Card writer; the box was still sealed in its original plastic security wrapping.

He excitedly opened the package, attached the writer to his turned off computer and booted the machine up. He installed the software off the enclosed CD-ROM and voila, he could write to a Smart Card. He opened the other downloaded software program, en-

tered the model of his Smart Card writer and transferred the data to the card. He had a VISA to travel to see Derek! The real beauty of the whole scheme was that since the Federal government hadn't issued the card, he didn't have to turn it in at the end of his trip. All the federal government did was erase the chip and recycle the cards anyway. He could do that now with his downloaded software and the illegal Smart Card Writer.

"Screw you again, John McCain," he thought.

It was time to raid a quarry again. All of those bridges in Tucson had used up their Tovex. They still had some fuse and blasting caps and electrical detonators, but they didn't have any Tovex. The ANFO, in large quantities, made one hell of an explosion if it had a Tovex charge to initiate it. According to CNN and FOX news, that's what the May Day terrorists had used.

The government had implemented strict Federal controls on explosives. You couldn't walk in off the street and buy explosives with a driver's license anymore. You needed a government permit; a Federal government permit! But some of those mine/quarry operators couldn't get used to the new, tighter Federal controls and still stored their explosives in the locked steel sheds. They talked it over, the three old men, and decided to go for it. Living in this society with all the permits and everything was as bad as being in jail anyway, what did they have to lose?

They tried the quarry where they had scored the Tovex years before. Hell, this guy was even using the same shed. They cleaned him out lock, stock and barrel. Let him explain to the feds why his security was so lax! McCain was using FEMA and the ATF in ways neither the Congress nor the Constitution ever imagined. It was time for another Revolution.

They started out on a small scale, traveling to cities where there were Federal offices. They didn't bomb the offices; instead they went for the vehicles. A whole stick of Tovex rendered one of those Suburban's the feds favored so much just so much junk.

When they needed a Travel Permit, out came the rubber stamp. When they needed a Travel VISA because of the distance involved, the Smart Cards went into the Writer, were erased and reprogrammed and off they went. At least McCain hadn't pushed through legislation to reverse the reforms George had made to the guns laws, but that was probably only a matter of time.

Those fellas with the download? They worked for an Internet Provider and every week they changed the name of their website. They stayed well ahead of the curve and had at least a dozen domain names available at all times. These two men were part of the growing patriot movement in the United States of America.

And, that guy who sold the blank VISA cards? It was the same story, but a different guy. He was also the fella who sold the Smart Card Writers. He was a Patriot out of Georgia and he sort of looked at the whole thing as the Second War of Northern Aggression. He

went on E-Bay once a week and either sold the “Popular Patterns” Smart Cards or the ‘Complete’ Smart Card readers. And where did he get them you might ask? Well, he worked for the company that manufactured the writers right there in an Atlanta suburb. And the cards came from a friend who worked for another company who manufactured the Smart Cards.

The recent rash of explosions had President McCain all worked up. It couldn't be the work of the May Day bombers, the FBI had finally caught all of them and they were languishing in cells at Leavenworth eating Spam and cursing the Great Satan. This had to be the work of some of those separatists or a hate group. Or maybe, one of those Patriot organizations that seemed to be coming out of the walls these days. Whoever it was, he'd stop them or his name wasn't John McCain, Republican, er Democrat President of these United States. He had to give FEMA and the ATF more power that was what he had to do.

The three men happened to catch the FOX News broadcast where the new Executive Order was announced. My God, the President had lost his mind. He was authorizing FEMA and the ATF to shoot terrorists on sight. They were going to have to be a lot more careful in the future. This wasn't just about going to jail anymore, this was about getting their butts shot off. What was the country coming to?

The Gallup Fleetwood dealer had used a local contractor to put in their basements and shelters back in 2004. Gary had met the guy his name was Jim Thomas. Thomas mostly did poured concrete work, but they also laid blocks. Gary had had Thomas come out to Sun Valley after the UN Police action and pour him a separate shelter well away from the homes. They used this shelter to store their explosives.

When he finally decided to finish off his basement, Thomas had recommended a carpenter named Jim Littletree. Littletree and his cousins, that just meant they were Indians too, had finished off the basement in car siding just like Gary had wanted. He even built Gary a ‘secret’ door to his shelter. The door was opened and closed by a worm drive garage door opener. Pretty slick Gary had thought at the time, I never would have thought of that. Gary moved his counterfeiting operation to his shelter, out of sight from a curious world.

One of Littletree's other ‘cousins’ was one of the local Paramedics in Holbrook. That was good to know. Over the period since the UN Police action, the two Jim's, as they called the guys, and the old men had become pretty good friends. Littletree had blabbed to Thomas about the ‘secret’ door to Gary's shelter and Thomas had taken to calling Gary Colonel Mustard, probably from the game Clue with its secret passages.

It turned out that the bunch of Indians and Thomas were Survivalists/Patriots just like the three old men. One time Thomas had made some rather sharp remarks about John McCain, saying that he didn't understand how someone from Arizona could act the way McCain was acting. Jim was bitching about the Travel Permit situation. 20 miles wasn't a very long distance in eastern Arizona. Jim did a lot of jobs in Winslow. Gary thought

about it long and hard, but eventually decided that he could trust Jim Thomas and he made Jim a rubber stamp. A few days later, Jim Littletree showed up wanting his stamp.

Gary had obliged and the trust he'd shown the men was greatly rewarded. There were 8 of them in the group now; the paramedic Johnny Bighawk, Littletree, Thomas, Raymond 'Ray' Longbow, Jesus 'Geronimo' Black and the three old men. Thomas knew several places where explosives were stored in the area and pretty soon that new shelter was filled to overflowing with Tovex and commercial ANFO.

Gary fixed up a set of Travel VISA's and they traveled east on I-40 to I-25 and north to Raton. It was a lovely place to use some of the ANFO and they brought down a whole mountainside, blocking I-25 completely. The next time they went out, they headed west and they closed the stretch of highway in the Virgin River Gorge. Took it down in three places; that would give the feds something to keep them busy.

The US Interstate highway system had originally been thought up in the Eisenhower administration in the 1950's. The original purpose of the system had been to provide for the rapid movement of military men and matériel in the case of a war. Over the sixty intervening years, the system had become the main arteries for most travel in the US.

Since McCain had invoked the Travel Permit restrictions in his version of the Patriot Act, travelers seldom used the Interstates. Truck traffic also became a thing of the past; it was just too complicated to get all of the Travel VISA's and permissions. The interstates were now almost the exclusive territory of the military. Bringing down the passes at Raton and in the Virgin River Gorge hadn't particularly hurt a traveling public, but it sure interfered with the military. The men made sure that no one was around when they did their de-construction work. They didn't want to hurt people; they just wanted to inconvenience the feds.

By the time news of the latest road closing reached President John McCain, the 8 men were safely back in Holbrook and Sun Valley. McCain was beginning to realize that his policy of granting more power to FEMA and the ATF had backfired. Rather than the agencies clamping down on the rebellious citizens, his Executive Order had just created more rebels.

The costs estimates for rebuilding the Virgin River Gorge portion of I-15 were in the hundreds of millions of dollars. That pass at Raton would cost millions to clear. One thing was certain. Being President was a popularity contest and he was losing the contest. The latest Harris poll showed that barely 13% of the American public approved of the job he was doing. 41% favored impeachment. 78% said they would not vote for him in the next election.

Congress had turned on him too. The only way he could get anything implemented was by Executive Order. The Solicitor General had finally taken him to court over his last Executive Order asserting he had exceeded his authority. That case was before the US Supreme Court and the Attorney General had told him that they were going to lose.

The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was now a commentator for FOX News, they must have offered more than CNN, and the General was writing a book to be called *Web of Deceit*. He had a pretty good idea what that book was going to be about.

“Did you hear the news?” Ron asked excitedly, “McCain is going to address the nation at 9 pm Eastern. FOX is speculating that he’s going to issue a new Executive Order.”

“Not interested Ronald,” Gary said curtly. “At least I didn’t vote for that SOB.”

“He’s probably going to talk about our adventure in the Gorge,” Ron said.

“Good for him,” Gary said, “Still not interested. You and Clarence are the big John McCain fans; you watch it and let me know if he says anything I should know. Now leave me be Ronald, I’m planning our next outing.”

“Oh, where are we going?” Ron asked.

“San Francisco,” Gary said. “Thought that we’d take a stab at the Golden Gate.”

“The bridge?” Ron’s eyes bugged out, “What are you, out of your mind?”

“Maybe,” Gary said, “And, maybe not.”

After The Big One – Chapter 8 – Pushing the Prez

Ron knew Gary well enough to know that he was yanking his chain. They didn't have enough explosives or the expertise it took to take down a target like the Golden Gate Bridge. Gary would tell him when the time came what he really intended to hit next. It was probably be something small. They had finished off their supply of ANFO and that, physically, had been the bulk of their explosives. There were only 4 or 5 cases of Tovex left in the explosives shelter. He got Clarence and they settled down in front of the TV to listen to the President.

In essence, McCain apologized to the American people. He had been trying to protect them in these trying times. Effective immediately, Travel Permits would be good for one year at a time and the Permit was good anywhere in the United States.

He pointed out that the FBI suspected that the closures on I-25 and I-15 were the work of Separatists or Hate Groups. Whoever it was, if they were listening, should stop right now before someone got hurt. It would likely be the bombers who would be hurt, not federal authorities, he assured the American public. During the speech, the President had looked away for the briefest moment and gave a nearly imperceptible shake of his head. What was that all about?

Ron immediately went to tell Gary about the changes in the Travel Permits. Gary wasn't satisfied. When they had total freedom of movement without having to carry around a stamped document giving them permission, then and only then, would he be satisfied.

"I know you're not going to blow up the Golden Gate Bridge butthead, we don't know how and we only have 4 or 5 cases of Tovex left," Ron said, "What are you going to blow up?"

"I've been thinking that we ought to stay closer to home," Gary said.

"Yes...and?" Ron pressed.

"Well, I was thinking about helping out all of these nice folks here in the Holbrook area," Gary said, "You do know that they get paid overtime when they have to restore power don't you?"

"You're not going to blow up the power plant are you?" Ron asked, sure Gary meant something else.

"Hell no," Gary said, "But all of those power lines are an easy target. It will take them days to replace the towers and that's a lot of overtime for the Holbrook folks."

"Hmm," Ron said, "And if we just take out the big lines, that won't affect the people in Holbrook will it?"

“Not at all,” Gary said, “And since that edict that everyone with critical life support equipment must have standby power was issued, it won’t hurt people who lose their electricity either. Besides, all the hospitals and places like that already had standby power.”

“I don’t know Gar-Bear,” Ron said, “No electricity means no refrigerators or freezers either. Most of the gas stoves these days require electricity to work too. People are going to be mighty inconvenienced if you take down those power lines.”

“I’m not saying they won’t Ron,” Gary replied, “But if they’re inconvenienced what are they likely to do?”

“Raise hell with the government like they always do,” Ron smiled.

“Exactly,” Gary smiled back, “And the President is from where?”

“When are we going to start?” Ron asked.

“Is three hours too soon?” Gary retorted.

They had to use blasting caps and fuses because the electrical detonators could be set off just by being too near the power lines. They strapped a stick on two legs of the 4-leg towers and a single stick on one leg of the 3-leg towers. The fuse took 6 seconds to burn an inch, so they made the fuses 20’ long (24 minutes). They would have a second tower wired and be working on a third tower before the first one came down.

They started a ways out from Holbrook and worked their way further away. They skipped a night and tackled another line. Then, rather than skip a night, they went two nights in a row; they didn’t want to be predictable. The other big generation station in Arizona was at Palo Verde. Gary said as soon as they had some more Tovex, they would make a trip down to Phoenix and take out those power lines.

President McCain was studying a map of the US. Someone was taking out the power lines in the Holbrook area. Holbrook was about the same distance from Raton and from the Virgin River Gorge. He began to wonder if the bombers weren’t from the Holbrook area. He called the Director of the FBI and told him to get on it. It might be some of those snowbirds; surely no Arizona resident would betray him like this.

The men were literally out of Tovex; they didn’t have a single stick left. Gary stored the detonators, caps, fuse and wire in his shelter, they couldn’t be stored with the explosives. Jim Littletree had also concealed Ron’s shelter door and Clarence’s shelter door. He said that if he didn’t, someone would probably figure out that Gary had a shelter too. They had paneling on their walls, so he had to do it a little different, but the result was the same, the panel opened with a garage door opener and couldn’t be seen unless it were open.

The FBI descended on Holbrook like a hoard of locusts. They questioned everyone in town and then began to move to the 'suburbs'. They had John Doe search warrants issued by the secret court under the Patriot Act. Usually they didn't have to use them, the people were pretty cooperative.

They finally made it to the development at Sun Valley. Most of the people in Sun Valley were retired people who had permanently relocated to Arizona from up north. Three of the residents were men who had relocated from California. They had survived the big one in Palmdale back in 2004 they told him and had lived here ever since.

They asked to search the homes and one of the guys, his name was Olsen, told them to get a warrant. They produced one of the John Doe warrants and wrote his name in. This old codger was pretty well prepared. He had a generator out back with 30,000-gallons of propane, a 7,500-gallon water tank, and his basement was positively crammed with food. He told them he also had a storm shelter that he shared with his neighbors from Palmdale and they might just as well search it too, before they got the hell off his property. Gary led them to the shelter Jim Thomas had poured for him. It was completely empty.

Ron jumped Gary after the FBI had left. "What the hell do you think you were doing?" Ron asked.

"I was doing my Crusty Old Curmudgeon act," Gary laughed.

"What in the hell were you thinking of?" Ron pressed.

"Did you let them search your house and basement Ron?" Gary asked.

"Naturally," Ron said, "I'm a law abiding citizen."

"Uh-huh," Gary said, "And of course you showed them your shelter and all of those M16A2's from the Show Low Armory and your unregistered suppressors, right?"

"What do you think I'm nuts like you?" Ron asked, "Of course not."

"Well I didn't show them either," Gary winked, "And because I gave them a hard time, they really searched my place. Opened boxes, looked in drawers, the whole nine yards. Anyway, if they come back again to search, who are they going to search, you or me? Now that they've checked us out, we can go steal some more Tovex."

"Maybe we'd better wait on that a few days Gar-Bear," Ron suggested, "They might come back."

"Whatever," Gary laughed.

When they got back to Holbrook that agent Gary had given a hard time pulled his file of

Travel Permits. The old guy really got around. He checked the Permits against the log and only about 5% of the Permits were recorded in the log. Hmm... He decided to go back to Sun Valley and question Olsen again. The old guy probably had a homemade Travel Permit Stamp or one he'd purchased from someone. Better to find out now than have it come back to bite him on the butt.

"What do you want now Agent?" Gary greeted the agent rather nastily.

"Can I come in?" the agent asked, "Or would you prefer to be dragged into Holbrook for questioning?"

"Come in, I've got nothing to hide," Gary replied.

"Mr. Olsen, you've made a lot of trips according to your Travel Permit file. The thing is, only about 5% of those Permits are recorded in the Log. How do you explain that?"

"Sloppy bookkeeping?" Gary asked.

"No Mr. Olsen," the agent replied, "I think that you have a Travel Permit Stamp. Several of them as a matter of fact."

"You will find no Travel Permit Stamps in my home," Gary replied coolly, "I suppose you have more of those John Doe Search Warrants so go ahead and search again. You have my permission."

"You don't leave me much choice Olsen," the agent said. He spoke into his radio and about 15 minutes later 3 Suburbans pulled up out front. There were 6 agents in each Suburban. The 19 agents searched the house from top to bottom and found nothing.

The agent asked about the four trailers parked behind Gary and Sharon's house and he told them 3 were empty and his son lived in one. Go ahead and search them too, there was nothing to find, Gary told them. They went through the four homes carefully, missing nothing. Aside from a large pile of dirty clothes in the son's trailer, everything was just what one would expect to find. The agent questioned Gary about guns, did he have any?

"Of course I have guns, agent," Gary said, "Who in their right mind wouldn't have guns in this day and age?"

"Where are they?" the agent asked.

Gary pointed to the Winchester over the fireplace and the Vaquero and western rig hanging from a peg.

"Right over there," Gary said, "Now if you go checking records, you'll find that I had quite an assortment of rifles and handguns at one time, but I got rid of those after the

war.”

“What did you do during the war Mr. Olsen?” the agent asked.

“Ever hear of the Rat Patrol?” Gary asked.

“The TV show or that bunch of Iowa Guardsmen who ran around Arizona during the war attacking the enemy?” the agent asked.

“The Guardsmen,” Gary said, “My son was one of them. They operated out of here.”

“Oh really?” the agent said, “But I asked what YOU did during the war?”

“Well, my two buddies and I went around picking up after the Rat Patrol,” Gary explained. “We set up where the Chinese or Mexicans were likely to run and picked them off.”

“What do you mean by picked them off,” the agent asked.

“Back then, I could still see and shoot pretty well. We made some ANFO pipe bombs and blew up some vehicles. I sniped a few of them,” Gary said. “Made a couple of trips to Tucson, too.”

“Tucson?” the agent remarked, “Were you part of...”

“The guys who rescued all of those Tucson folks?” Gary finished his sentence, “Guilty as charged.”

“They wanted to give you guys’ medals,” the agent said, “But the Guardsmen wouldn’t tell them who you were.”

“I know,” Gary replied.

“Which one of you took out the 10 guys?” the agent asked.

“That was me,” Gary said, “But I’d prefer if you just kept it to yourself, if that’s ok with you.”

“But why Mr. Olsen?” the agent said, “You’re a genuine hero.”

“Wasn’t in it to be a hero,” Gary said, “It was just something that needed to be done. Besides a lot of my motivation came from the enemy. They shot up my son’s tank and he had one hell of a time getting back to his supply lines. That po’d me.”

“Your son?” the agent asked, “The one in the trailer?”

“No, the one in the Army at Ft. Bliss, Texas,” Gary said. “The other one has problems with depression and he mostly just sits around and doesn’t do much at all.”

“Well Mr. Olsen,” the agent said, “Just because I can’t find that stamp doesn’t mean you don’t have one.”

“True,” Gary admitted, “But with McCain dropping the Travel Permits back to once a year, you don’t suppose I’d be foolish enough to keep it around anymore do you?”

“I suppose not,” the agent said, “Well if you don’t have it anymore and what with you’re being a war hero and all, I’m going to give you a pass. Try to stay out of trouble Mr. Olsen.”

“Thanks agent. I will,” Gary said, “Try that is,” he thought.

The FBI agents were barely out of the tract when Ron came storming in. “What in the hell was that all about?” he asked.

“Must be one of their brighter agents,” Gary said, “The guy checked my Travel Permits against the Log. Figured out that only about 5% of the Permits were recorded. He had me cold, so I told him to search to their hearts content.”

“I’m sure glad we didn’t steal that Tovex,” Ron said.

“Ron, I only suggested that we steal some more this morning,” Gary laughed, “We haven’t had time to steal it yet.”

“Anyway, how did it come out?” Ron asked.

He said, “Just because I can’t find that stamp doesn’t mean you don’t have one.”

So I said, “True, but with McCain dropping the Travel Permits back to once a year, you don’t suppose I’d be foolish enough to keep it around anymore do you?”

So he said, “I suppose not. Well if you don’t have it anymore and what with you’re being a war hero and all, I’m going to give you a pass. Try to stay out of trouble Mr. Olsen.”

“And?” Ron wanted to know.

“And they left,” Gary said.

“They’ll be back,” Ron warned.

“I’m sure they won’t Ron,” Gary said, “You should have seen his face when I told him I was the guy that killed those 10 guys in Tucson.”

“I thought that you didn’t want anyone to know that,” Ron said.

“I don’t, but I asked him to keep it to himself,” Gary said.

The agents’ report cleared the residents of Holbrook of any wrongdoing. One of the agents included a comment that he had met the guy who had killed the 10 UN troops in Tucson. That got his supervisor’s attention and he took it to his Assistant Director and the next day President John McCain had the full details about Gary Olsen and his two friends Ronald Green and Clarence Rawlings. The agent wished he hadn’t put it in his report, but what was done was done.

McCain dispatched Air Force One to Phoenix. He told the Director of the FBI to pick up the gentlemen and their wives and transport them to the White House. He wanted to meet them and pin a Medal of Freedom on them. Olsen would get the Presidential Medal of Freedom with Distinction and the other two the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Gary had to borrow a suit from Ron. He’d never replaced the suits he’d lost in the big one. Ron ragged his butt all the way to Washington too. Gary and his BIG MOUTH! Just had to tell that FBI agent didn’t he, Ron had said. Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time. Oh, well.

McCain even kept his smile when Gary leaned over to him while he was presenting the medal and said, “I didn’t vote for you and I won’t, medal or not.”

“Figures,” McCain thought.

Three weeks later, the same ‘terrorists’ blew up the high-tension towers leading away from the Palo Verde nuclear reactor.

McCain had the Director of the FBI standing in front of his desk in the Oval Office. He had just finished ripping the guy a new one.

“Maybe we should get those three old guys from Sun Valley that I gave the medals to out hunting down these bombers,” McCain said.

“For all we know Mr. President, those three old guys are the bombers,” the FBI Director said.

“What do you mean?” McCain asked.

“They were part of that Tucson raid Mr. President,” the Director explained. “The Guardsmen and they blew up four pairs of overpasses that we know of, probably five. I wouldn’t be a bit surprised to learn that one of the Guardsmen taught them how to use explosives and they’ve been out blowing up half the country.”

“That Olsen said to me *I didn’t vote for you and I won’t, medal or not,*” McCain shared

with the Director. "No, I don't think so. If he were involved in that, he wouldn't have made a crack like that. Look somewhere else." (Remember Mr. President; the best defense is a good offense.)

Clarence, Ron and Gary took some time off from the bombing business after that. They figured they'd pushed their luck about as far as it would stretch. Besides, it didn't look like McCain would get reelected. After Palo Verde, less than 10% of the American population supported him and 83% said they would not vote for him a second time.

The people in Holbrook that worked to APS were rolling in money. Most of them had worked double shifts getting the towers back up. Those that had worked the double shifts for 15 straight days made almost 6 months worth of wages in 15 days. They got straight time, time and one half, double time and some triple time. Not bad. When Palo Verde went many of them volunteered to help put those towers back up.

The year was 2012 and it was election time once more. McCain's popularity was so low that the Democrat Party refused to run him a second time. The Republicans wanted to capitalize on McCain's poor popularity, but they didn't really have a good candidate to run either.

Out of the Midwest, an Independent announced that he was running for President as an Independent. A former Navy Seal, actor, professional wrestler and Minnesota Governor, Jesse Ventura had the best chance of anyone. The Democrats couldn't buy the election after 4 years of John McCain and the Republicans couldn't either, Bush had unintentionally seen to that.

Polls showed Ventura leading by a wide margin. Gary got on that bandwagon in a big hurry. He liked guys would called them like they saw them and Ventura surely did that. Ventura almost didn't seem to care if he were elected or not. Maybe it was an act, but it was a good act. He was picking up endorsements from Republicans, Democrats and just about everyone except Teddy, Hillary, and Chuckie. That made him even more popular.

Jesse wasn't making a lot of promises either. The problem with making promises was that you had to keep them. His platform, if you could call it that, was that his name wasn't McCain, Bush or Clinton; it was Ventura. He said that he wouldn't make promises he couldn't keep. He would do his best to be an honest President and try to restore some dignity to the office that had seen sex in the Oval office, a President with a one-track mind fighting a war on terrorism against mythical WMD's and a President who tried to steal our most basic freedoms. Vote for me, Jesse said, and I see that you have both the chicken and a pot to put it in.

Jesse Ventura got 73% of the popular vote on the second Tuesday after the first Monday in November of 2012. No one had done that since Richard Nixon; talk about a Landslide. Jesse and his wife Terry even got out of the Presidential Limo ala Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter and walked hand in hand down Pennsylvania Avenue. The Secret Ser-

vice had a fit, but the President said he could take any of them if they tried to stop him. It wasn't going to be any fun guarding this President. McCain had been easy; he had been afraid to leave the White House. Ventura couldn't be more different.

There had been talk back in the early years of the decade of running Jesse for President in 2008. It hadn't happened. McCain had captured American hearts with his bold switch to the Democrat Party and his promises. Then, he'd turned around and stabbed Americans in the back.

Jesse immediately set about righting the many wrongs. He liked the new gun laws and left them alone. He struck down all of McCain's Executive Orders and introduced legislation to repeal the Patriot Act. There were no more bombings of high-tension towers. America was finally at peace.

"He's my kind of guy Ronald," Gary said. "First time I ever voted for someone for President who wasn't a Republican."

"I don't know as I would go around bragging about that Gar-Bear," Ron kidded.

"Gary, you mean to tell me you never voted for a Democrat before?" Clarence asked.

"Some, at the state level, but never for any for any federal office no," Gary admitted.

"I'm surprised at you Gary," Clarence said, "There have been plenty of good Democrat Presidents."

"In the history of the country, yes, Clarence, there have," But not in my lifetime."

"What about old given 'em hell Harry?" Ron asked.

"Truman?" Gary asked, "Well I suppose. And, Kennedy might have been alright if he hadn't been killed, although I can name a few John Birchers who would disagree with that."

"John who?" Clarence asked.

"John Birch. In December 1958, Mr. Robert Welch gathered a small group of business and professional leaders to start a non-partisan education and action organization. They named their endeavor after the remarkable missionary-turned-soldier, Captain John Birch, who was slain by Chinese Communists a few days after the end of World War II. It was a big deal back in the 50's and sixties," Gary said. "Made the mistake back in '64 of saying that Kennedy was our greatest President to one of them. Bent my ear good. Anyway, I like Hubert Humphrey. Socialist as they come, but I liked the guy. Good thing he didn't get elected in 1968, he died of cancer shortly thereafter."

"What about Bobby Kennedy?" Clarence asked.

“What about Bobby Kennedy?” Gary asked back, “Word was he was sleeping with Marilyn too. He was ok, I guess, for a Democrat.”

“He took on Hoffa and the Teamsters.” Clarence said, “And he was right in there with JFK at that Cuban missile thing.”

“I know, I watch TV too Clarence,” Gary said, “But I’m pretty sure I would have voted for Nixon anyway.”

“I am not a crook!” Ron said imitating Nixon’s address to the nation.

“He probably wasn’t a crook Ron, but he was an arrogant SOB,” Gary said before Clarence could say the same thing. “Great on Foreign Policy, but a Dork when it came to Domestic Policy.”

“Enough of the history lesson already,” Ron pleaded. “What about Ventura?”

“Well, he was a SEAL,” Clarence said, “That ought to tell you something.”

“I checked that out,” Gary said, “Jesse Ventura went through UDT/SEAL Class 58 in 1970 and was assigned to UDT-12, where he spent three years (including three deployments to Subic Bay, Philippines).

As a UDT frogman, he operated in Viet Nam waters and earned the US Viet Nam Service Ribbon. He undoubtedly, like so many UDT men of that era, went ashore in Viet Nam for short periods of time. After he was released from active duty in 1973, he joined Reserve SEAL Team ONE.

The point here is that all graduates of BUD/S are referred to within the Naval Special Warfare community as SEALs. They received the same training, whether they went to SEAL Teams or Underwater Demolition Teams. The case made by Commander Salisbury on Fox News Channel recently is without merit; Jesse Ventura is a SEAL by any definition.”

“That Richard Marcinko was a SEAL, too,” Ron said, “Not everybody loves every SEAL.”

“Who is Richard Marcinko?” Clarence asked.

“I’ll answer that,” Ron said, “Over his thirty year naval career, Richard Marcinko worked his way from enlisted man to the rank of captain. During his early years, Marcinko joined the UDTs (Underwater Demolition Teams), and served as a Navy SEAL during the war in Vietnam. While serving 2 tours in Vietnam, Marcinko won the Silver Star, four bronze stars with combat V, two Navy Commendation Medals, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star. Marcinko’s SEAL platoon became such an enemy killing

force, that the Viet Cong posted a reward of 50,000 piasters for his death.

“Besides serving as a Naval Attaché to Cambodia and later as CO of SEAL Team Two, Marcinko was the founder and first Commanding Officer of two of the military's premier counter-terrorist units: SEAL TEAM SIX and RED CELL. The legendary SEAL TEAM SIX engaged in highly classified counter terrorist missions in Central America, the Middle East, the North Sea, Africa and beyond.

“While commanding RED CELL, Marcinko used his teams' expertise as Navy SEALs to test the Navy's anti-terrorist capabilities. The result: RED CELL infiltrated supposedly impenetrable US military bases, weapons storage areas, aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, and other 'secure areas'. As Red Cell penetrated bases and took hostages, Marcinko's unit ran roughshod over would be defenders. Nothing was immune to RED CELL's 'terrorist attacks', not even the President's jet, Air Force One.

“Richard Marcinko is recognized as one of the nation's most accomplished special operations experts, with over 30 years experience in diplomacy, intelligence, counter-terrorism, and special operations. His SEAL Team experiences are recounted in his autobiography, *Rogue Warrior* and the subsequent *Rogue Warrior* fiction series, co-written with John Weisman.”

After The Big One – Chapter 9 – Closure

“I read a couple of Marcinko’s books,” Gary responded. “Guy must walk around with his arm in a sling from patting himself on the back so hard.”

“You have something bad to say about everyone don’t you Gary,” Clarence said.

“Clarence,” Ron responded, “Gary is just a cynic. The good in people is usually out there for everyone to see. Gar-Bear had some tough lessons back between ’96 and the big one. Everyone is the sum of his or her individual experiences. It’s just with a Crusty Old Fart like Gar, he lets it all hang out.”

“Let’s see,” Clarence retorted. “Gary has it in for the news media, lawyers and politicians. Gary, is there anyone you do like?”

“My wife, my friends and Missy,” Gary laughed. “That’s a lot of people.”

“Gary, Missy is a DOG,” Clarence retorted.

“Don’t let her hear you say that,” Gary smiled. “At least Missy is predictable. She pees and poops where she pleases and shows no guilt. When she wants a treat, she whines until I give in. People are an entirely different story. They will look you in the eye and lie to you. Some people seem to think ‘what’s mine is mine and what’s yours is mine if I can get it’. Reporters don’t report. Lawyers use every conniving legal loophole there is to get guilty people off. Honest and politician don’t even belong in the same sentence. Does that make me cynical? If so, so be it. I just want to make it to my next birthday. I never thought I’d make it to 70.”

“Yeah,” Ron said, “We’re getting pretty long in the tooth to be doing all of this Survivalist crap anymore. It’s time for the next generation to take over.”

“Amen,” Clarence said.

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